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METAL

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THE NEW TESTAMENT 1986 2021

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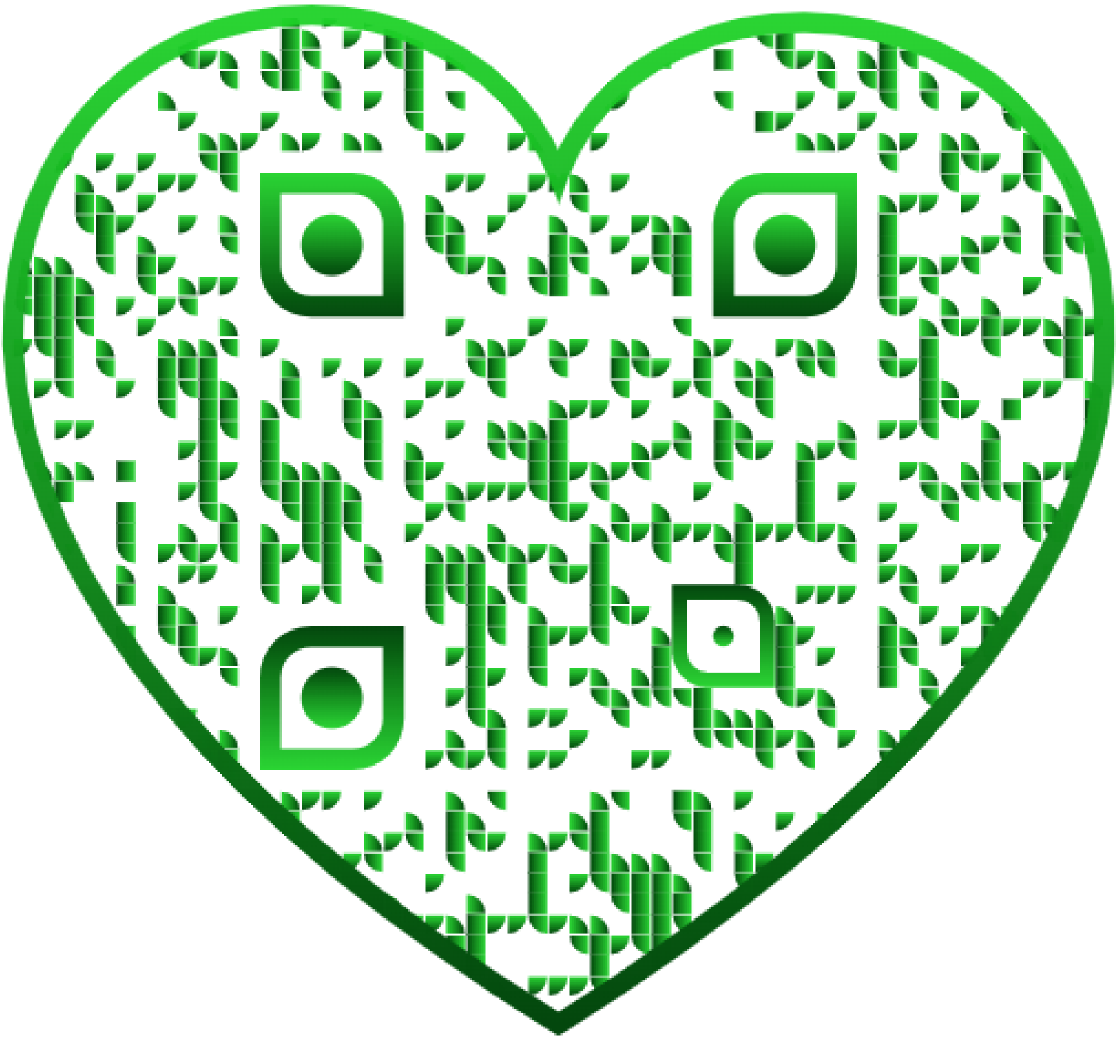

METAL

THE NEW TESTAMENT

At some point in the distant future, cultural historians in shimmering silver suits with music and video being beamed directly into their planet-sized brains will look back on the holy texts of the late 20th century/early 21st century metal scene and say, "What the fuck was that all about?"

They'd have a point. If metal's first decade and a half – its Old Testament – was a rush of excitement and exploration, the period from 1986 onwards was where everything went absolutely batshit crazy.

The new prophets – from Metallica and Guns N' Roses to Pantera, Korn, Marilyn Manson and beyond – took the stone tablets passed down by metal's elders and smashed them into a thousand pieces. Suddenly, metal was more than just one genre – it was dozens. It was more than just one way of life – it was whatever you wanted it to be.

In this second volume of *The Story Of Metal*, we look at the genre's New Testament in all its noisy, larger-than-life, glory. We pick up the story in 1986, with the landscape-changing impact of thrash metal and Guns N' Roses, then follow its breakneck journey through alt-metal, nu metal, metalcore and beyond. There are returning icons such as Maiden and Ozzy plus next-generation heroes in the shape of Rammstein, Avenged Sevenfold, Babymetal and more, with all manner of wild and wonderful pit stops along the way.

It all brings us up to today, over 50 years after this genre we're all here to salute was born. So raise a toast to over half-century of metal – and another to the next 50 years...

Dave

Dave Everley, Editor

"If metal's first decade and a half – its Old Testament – was a rush of excitement and exploration, the period from 1986 onwards was where everything went batshit crazy..."

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THE STORY OF METAL
VOL. 2

THE NEW TESTAMENT

1986-1989

THE THRASH EXPLOSION, HAIR METAL BABYLON AND THE ALTERNATIVE REVOLUTION – THIS IS HOW THE WORLD GOT FASTER, LOUDER AND BIGGER.

Kerry is King

"NAZIS, HARD COCKS, POPES. THOSE WERE WEIRD TIMES"

KERRY KING

WORLD PAINTED BLOOD

In October 1986, **Slayer** released *Reign In Blood* – an album that would change metal forever. In 2012, Kerry King and Tom Araya looked back on a thrash masterpiece.

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY PORTRAIT: STEVE BROWN

GETTY X2

Slayer (clockwise from left): Dave Lombaro, Jeff Hanneman, Tom Araya, Kerry King.

It was towards the end of the sessions for *Reign In Blood* when the nickel finally dropped for Tom Araya that he and his bandmates were sitting on something unique. Slayer's singer and bassist was sitting in the control of Hollywood's Hit City West Studio with Andy Wallace, the engineer on their third album and the man charged with capturing a band who had reached terminal velocity in every respect.

They had just finished mixing *Raining Blood*, the perfectly compressed epic that closed the album in a deluge of torment and viscera, when Tom glanced up at the monitor on the wall. The 10 songs that made up the album were listed on the screen, as was a time: 28. He wasn't sure what the number represented. Twenty-eight seconds, maybe? But that didn't make sense. Perplexed, he turned to Andy.

"Andy, is that 28 minutes?" he said.

"Yeah," came the engineer's reply.

"Is that for *all* the songs?" said Tom.

Andy looked up from his desk to the monitor on the wall and back down to the screen on his console. "Yeah," he said. "That's 28 minutes."

Unsure of whether 10 songs that ran to 28 minutes – or 28 minutes and 58 seconds, to be exact – actually constituted an album, or whether they'd have to come up with more music, they decided to take their concerns to Rick Rubin, the album's producer. The bear-like Rick had steered the band through the sessions with a mix of fanboy enthusiasm and Zen master calm, and the answer lay with him. If he said yes, everything would be fine. If he said no, this perfectly balanced fusion of speed, aggression and provocation could be ruined.

More than a quarter of a century on, you can hear the admiration in the frontman's voice when he recalls Rick's answer. "His only reply," says Tom, "was that it had 10 songs, verses, choruses and leads and that's what constituted an album. He didn't have any issue with it."

Rick's judgment sealed not only *Reign In Blood*'s fate as one of the crown jewels of thrash metal's Golden Age, but also ensured its status as one of the great albums of all time. What Tom and his bandmates didn't know then, but what they certainly know now, is in 28 minutes and 58 seconds, they had changed the game forever.

"HAVE WE MADE AN ALBUM THAT'S AS GOOD AS *REIGN IN BLOOD*?" DEFINITELY NOT"

KERRY KING

In May 2012, more than a quarter of a century after its release, Slayer will play *Reign In Blood* in its entirety as part of ATP's I'll Be Your Mirror, a three-day festival at London's Alexandra Palace where they'll be sharing the stage with a wilfully eclectic mix of bands.

"Nah, haven't heard of any of 'em," says Kerry King, in the sort of clipped, no-bullshit tones you'd expect of a man who has pursued an unswerving musical vision for the last 30 years.

Few musicians sound as comfortable in their own skin as Kerry and Tom, but few have had the luxury of making an out-of-the-park classic so early in their careers. *Reign In Blood* tapped into a reservoir of confidence so vast that even the very serious tribulations of the past two years couldn't shake them off course.

In 2010, the band were forced to cancel several shows when Tom required urgent back surgery. A year later, in 2011, guitarist Jeff Hanneman nearly died after contracting the flesh-eating disease necrotizing fasciitis, after being bitten by a spider in his jacuzzi.

"He's playing again, but we're letting him go at his pace," says Tom. "Will he play the show in London? Well, we're gonna see how well prepared we are. We're *hoping* that he can step in, but that's basically where we're at with it."

Right now, the band are prepping for their 12th album. They have nine songs written ("All the stuff I wrote, it seems like it's more on the thrash side," says Kerry. "I gotta pull myself back and make up some heavy stuff"). The plan is to enter the studio with producer Greg Philbin in August, though drummer Dave Lombardo suggests there might be a stop-gap EP before the album emerges.

Of course, the 800lb gorilla in the corner of the room is the fact that any Slayer album, no matter how good, will always exist in the shadow of *Reign In Blood*. The mere fact that it's the only album they choose to play live in its entirety speaks volumes. Kerry King is characteristically blunt about the matter.

"Have we made an album that's as good as *Reign In Blood*?" says the guitarist. "Definitely not."

When Slayer released their second album, *Hell Awaits*, in September 1985, thrash metal had left puberty behind and was entering adolescence. The youthful noise of Metallica, Anthrax and Slayer themselves had given way to something more focused, yet even more savage (Megadeth arrived late to the party, albeit more fully formed).

Hell Awaits cemented Slayer's status as thrash's bastard princes. The souped-up trad metal of their debut album, *Show No Mercy*, had been superseded by a hellish noise that sounded like it had been recorded in the seventh circle of hell. Tom's barked-out occult hymns in clipped, 100-words-per-minute tones foreshadowed what he'd do on *Reign In Blood*. Incredibly, given both its sound and subject matter, major labels were circling.

"You'd have thought Slayer would have been a tough sell," says Brian Slagel, who had signed the band to his label, Metal Blade, and produced their

Rick Rubin: The phantom fifth member.

first two albums. "But these were the days when all the majors were getting involved with metal and all the labels were over them, trying to work something out. The band had so much momentum – they were the biggest band who weren't involved with a major at the time."

One very interested party was producer Rick Rubin. The 22-year-old New York University graduate had recently set up his own record label, Def Jam, and had bagged a distribution deal with CBS Records. Rick was immersed in the Big Apple's burgeoning hip hop scene, producing the likes of LL Cool J, Run DMC and the Beastie Boys, but he was a rock fan at heart – he grew up on Black Sabbath and AC/DC, and had played in a punk band, Hose. After a friend told him about thebuzz surrounding Slayer, Rick decided to check the band out for himself.

"I first met them at their show at The Ritz in NYC [in September 1985]," Rick tells *Metal Hammer*. "I knew nothing about them before the show and they blew me away."

It was an unlikely collision of worlds, not least for the members of Slayer. "Somebody goes, 'Hey, I want you to meet Rick Rubin. He's the guy from Def Jam. He's a big fan'," says Tom. "We were, like… Def Jam? [Sounding baffled] Uh, *OK*…' So he came to the show, we met him, and he really liked the band. He said he wanted to work with us."

Any reservations about a potential culture clash were over-ridden by common sense and business sense. Rick's drive to sign the band suggested they'd be a top priority. As Kerry points out, Slayer would have been fools to turn him down.

"Here's a guy who does a hip hop label, who is so into a metal band that he signed that band on his label," says the guitarist. "It was a slam dunk for me."

Ask Kerry today if there was any rivalry between thrash metal's pacesetters in the 80s, and his reply is an emphatic "No." But then, as now, Slayer offered something different: darker, edgier and purer than their peers. They may have all been in it together, but subconsciously, Slayer were determined to set themselves apart.

"There was constant competition between all of those bands," says Brian Slagel, countering Kerry's assertion. "Who was the fastest band? They took that very seriously, and that's one thing that led to the speed of *Reign In Blood*."

The songs that Kerry and Jeff were writing for their fourth album back up that notion. Even early on, the band's intentions were clear. "Everybody else was doing something slow," says Tom "Kerry and Jeff said that they didn't want to do a slow record – they wanted to do something fast. We were young. We were hungry. And we wanted to be faster than everybody else."

In the cross-cultural melting pot of mid-80s LA, it was inevitable that other influences were going to seep in. Jeff, for one, was a fan of fist-in-the-face Los Angeles punk bands such as D.I. and Verbal Abuse, and had even formed his own hardcore outfit, Pap Smear. Punk's terse, violent approach could be heard in the new songs.

"He was going into these speciality shops where they played nothing but underground music," recalls Tom. "He'd show up with these punk discs. Then Dave got into it, and so did I, because it was different. The last one on the wagon was Kerry – he was a metalhead, he didn't understand it at first. But eventually he started to like it."

Slayer may have bagged themselves a major label deal, but they still weren't rich enough to afford a proper crew beyond Tom's brother, John. When they decamped to Hit City West, a small, storefront studio on the edges of Hollywood, in the summer of 1986, they set their gear up themselves.

"We'd rehearsed it and practised enough," says Tom. "We went in and Rick said, 'Let's just record it.' We just played it until Rick was satisfied with the performances. You're young, you can do this forever."

Rick was a key figure in the studio. The producer set up a sofa, where he'd sit and listen to the music with his eyes closed, dispensing his thoughts like a bearded guru. He told them that they didn't need any reverb on the guitars or vocals. The result was a sound that was as dry as a bone and heavy as granite; it instantly set Slayer apart from the other kids on the thrash metal block.

Today, Rick is modest as to his input. "It really is a testament to how great a band Slayer is," he says. "It's very close to being a live album, very well recorded in a studio. Slayer didn't sound like anyone else, that's why the album sounds different than other metal albums. They really were creating their own genre."

"There wasn't anything hard about it," says Tom. "The only thing was that we told Dave to speed it up: 'C'mon, let's pick it up a bit!"

And with that one simple instruction, *Reign In Blood* was trimmed from an already compact 34 minutes to an unfathomably terse 28 minutes and 58 seconds.

"I don't think that I even realised it until I got the record and I listened to it, and I went, 'That's a little short'," says Brian Slagel. "But it's one of those records that's so good – 28 minutes of sheer brilliance is better than something that's longer and not as good.

If there were any doubts as to their intentions, it was all laid out in the first few seconds of *Angel Of Death*. The gold-standard for album openers, it was also Slayer's grand statement of intent. Seventeen seconds of relentlessly grating guitars are punctuated by bursts of precision tooled-rhythm, before Tom launches into the greatest scream in the history of metal ("It took two takes," laughs the frontman.)

Where *Hell Awaits* was ornate and occult-themed, its successor tones down both the complexity and the Satanic shtick. *Necrophobic*,

GETTY

Criminally Insane

Jesus Saves and *Reborn* are concentrated blasts of noise that wear the influence of Jeff's beloved hardcore punk, while only *Altar Of Sacrifice* descends into hackneyed 'Hail Satan!' territory (tellingly, that song dated from the sessions for *Hell Awaits*. The resulting album was bleak, relentless and inhuman, a Hieronymus Bosch painting brought to life for 28 writhing, screaming minutes. It sounded like nothing else that had come before.

"It's as if they were speaking a different musical language than the rest of the world," says Rick Rubin.

Inevitably, it was a language that not everybody understood. The recently founded music watchdog the Parents Music Resource Center had fostered a poisonous culture of censorship in America. Soon after they finished recording the album, Slayer received some news that threatened to upend the whole project. CBS, who distributed Def Jam albums, had refused to handle *Reign In Blood* despite the fact that it was already paid for. Their issues were down to two things: the cover and *Angel Of Death*.

The provocative sleeve had been painted by US artist Larry Carroll, and featured a hellish vista of a demonic Pope behind carried aloft by four figures, at least two of which were sporting enormous erections. But the real flashpoint was *Angel Of Death*. Their clinically graphic retelling of the horrors of Auschwitz was too much, for a label whose president, Walter Yetnikoff, was Jewish (although Rick Rubin, who was also Jewish, had no problem with it).

"All of a sudden, the record company doesn't want to release the album because of this song," says Tom. "When Jeff brought in the song, we thought, 'Wow, that's really cool – this was the guy [Nazi physician Josef Mengele] that did all those crazy, terrible things.' Then all of a sudden we discovered that people had a problem with that. We were, like, '*Fuuuuck...*'"

CBS demanded that they remove the song. There were big bucks riding on the album, and on paper, it looked like a tough choice for Slayer. In reality, there was no choice at all...

"We were never, ever tempted to do that," says Tom. "We felt we hadn't done anything wrong. They said: 'Take that song off the album.' Rick said: 'No.' And he went and found someone else to release it."

Reign In Blood Red

That 'someone else' was Geffen, a fast-rising label founded a few years earlier by music industry whizz kid David Geffen. For Geffen, controversy took second place to one thing: money.

Kerry admits that they never spoke to anyone from CBS about the issue, nor did they ask for an explanation. "I wasn't the Kerry King the world knows today," he says. "Looking back, I thought what I think now. I just wasn't as vocal about it."

Of course, the guitarist isn't a stupid man. He can see exactly what all the fuss was about.

"Absolutely," he says. "Nazis, hard cocks, Popes. Those were weird times."

Released in October 1986, right in the middle of a remarkable 12-month period that saw landmark albums from each of thrash's newly christened Big Four, *Reign In Blood* gave Slayer something they'd never had before: credibility. There were bumps in the road: Dave Lombardo quit in the middle of the US tour in support of the album, only to return a couple of months later, and the outcry over *Angel Of Death* refused to die, not least in Germany.

But nothing could derail this juggernaut. It cracked the US Top 100, eventually selling more than 500,000 in America alone – an astonishing figure for such an extreme album.

The men who made it are aware of their achievement. Ask Kerry King if he prefers *Reign In Blood* or *Master Of Puppets*, and his reply is instant: "*Reign In Blood*, because I did it." Ask Tom Araya to rank thrash's Big Four Albums – *Reign In Blood*, *Master Of Puppets*, *Peace Sells* and *Among The Living* – and he laughs: "In that order! That's perfect!"

The subsequent years have found Slayer plotting a steady, if sometimes wayward course – "I don't like much of what we did in the 90s," admits Kerry with typical frankness – but even when they've drifted, they've always had *Reign In Blood* to act as their North Star to bring them back to what they do best.

Today, nearly 26 years on, *Reign In Blood* has only grown in stature. But why is it so celebrated?

"I can't answer that," says Tom Araya. "Maybe it was because Rick Rubin produced it and it came out on a rap label. Maybe it was the controversy. Maybe it was because it was only 28 minutes. I don't know."

Brian Slagel explains: "It was a pivotal record at a pivotal time. When you have a record that's *that* good, it brings people in – punk fans loved it, metal fans loved it. It transcends the whole metal thing."

"It's so extreme and non-musical," says Rick Rubin, the man who helped breathe life into this monster. "It's like an assault. I can't think of another album that does what this album does."

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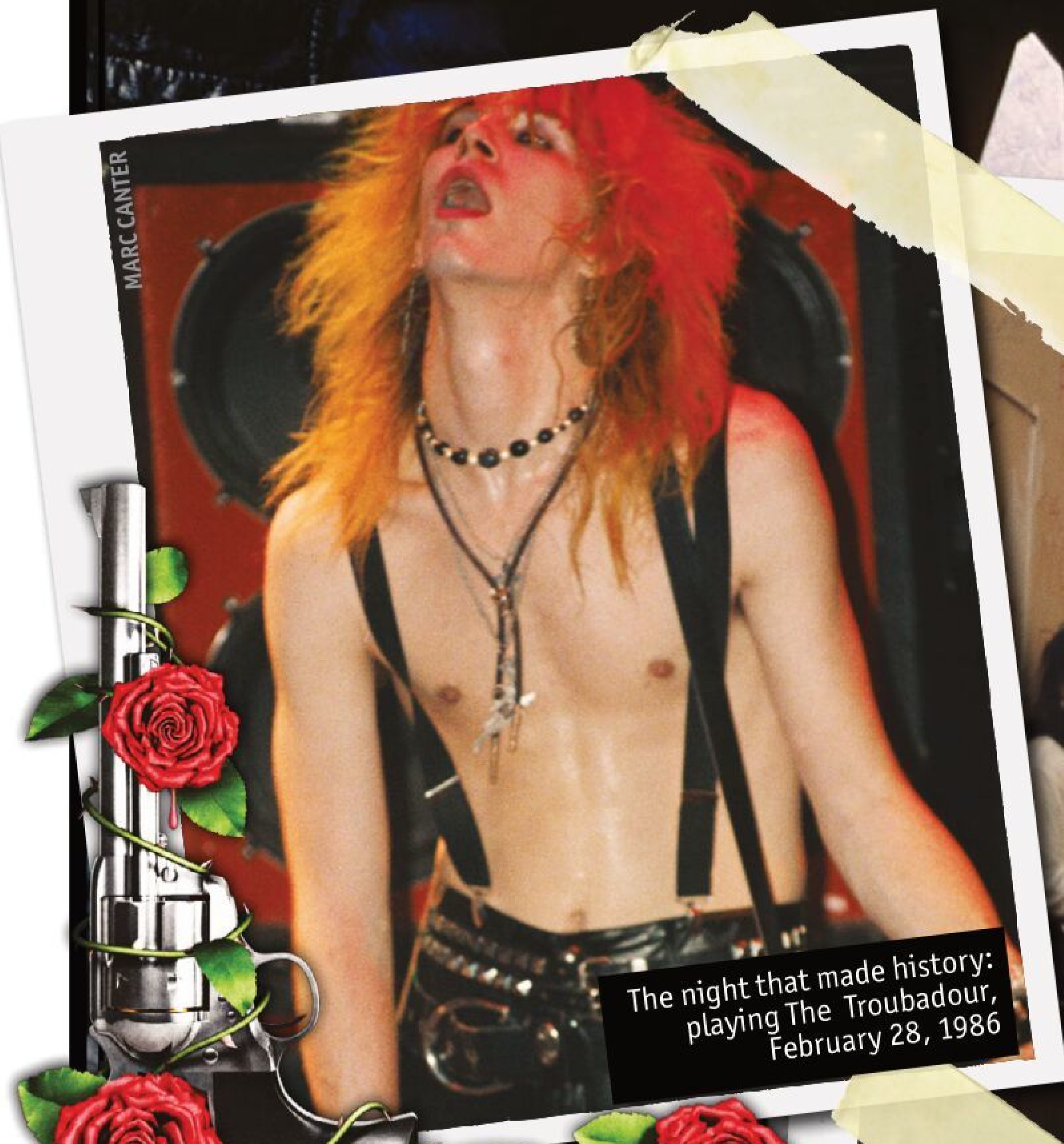
Letting their *Appetite* loose: the band at the start of their rise to fame



MARC CANTER

The night that made history: playing The Troubadour, February 28, 1986

MARC CANTER

At Fender's Ballroom, Long Beach, days before getting signed

THE WILD ONES

THERE ISN'T A METAL BAND ON THE PLANET THAT HASN'T BEEN AFFECTED BY GUNS N' ROSES. THIRTY YEARS ON, THE IMPACT OF THEIR TURBULENT INCEPTION IS BEING FELT AS KEENLY AS EVER.

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

"I watch MTV and it's hard not to throw shit at the TV set because it's so fucking boring. Even the bands around here in LA are the same way, the whole music industry. We meet these people and they say, 'Do this, do that.' And we go, 'Fuck it, fuck you!' Because it's just not us. We do whatever we want to..." **AXL ROSE, 1986**

Scene: exterior of a club, the Sunset Strip, Hollywood, an undetermined night in the mid-80s. The imaginary camera in your head pans across the sidewalk, taking in the otherworldly images. Crowds of people of unspecified and indistinguishable gender cluster in pools of neon, some of them gripping half-full beer bottles, others clutching empty shot glasses. The chatter of voices and clack of high heels is drowned out by a choir of Harley Davison engines roaring by. Someone throws a bottle over their shoulder, not caring where it lands. It arcs up and down, then smashes in the busy street. Someone laughs, and they all head towards the door.

Cut to: the club's interior. The imaginary camera weaves around the tightly-packed crowd, cutting through the Aquanet hairpsray smog as it heads towards the front of this tiny venue. On the club's stage, five junkie-looking men in last night's make-up and last week's leather trousers are train-crashing through a new song they've just written called *Welcome To The Jungle*. The drape behind them reads 'Guns N' Roses', with a logo to match. Besides them, a trio of barely-clothed women gyrate in their underwear. It's hot and getting hotter…

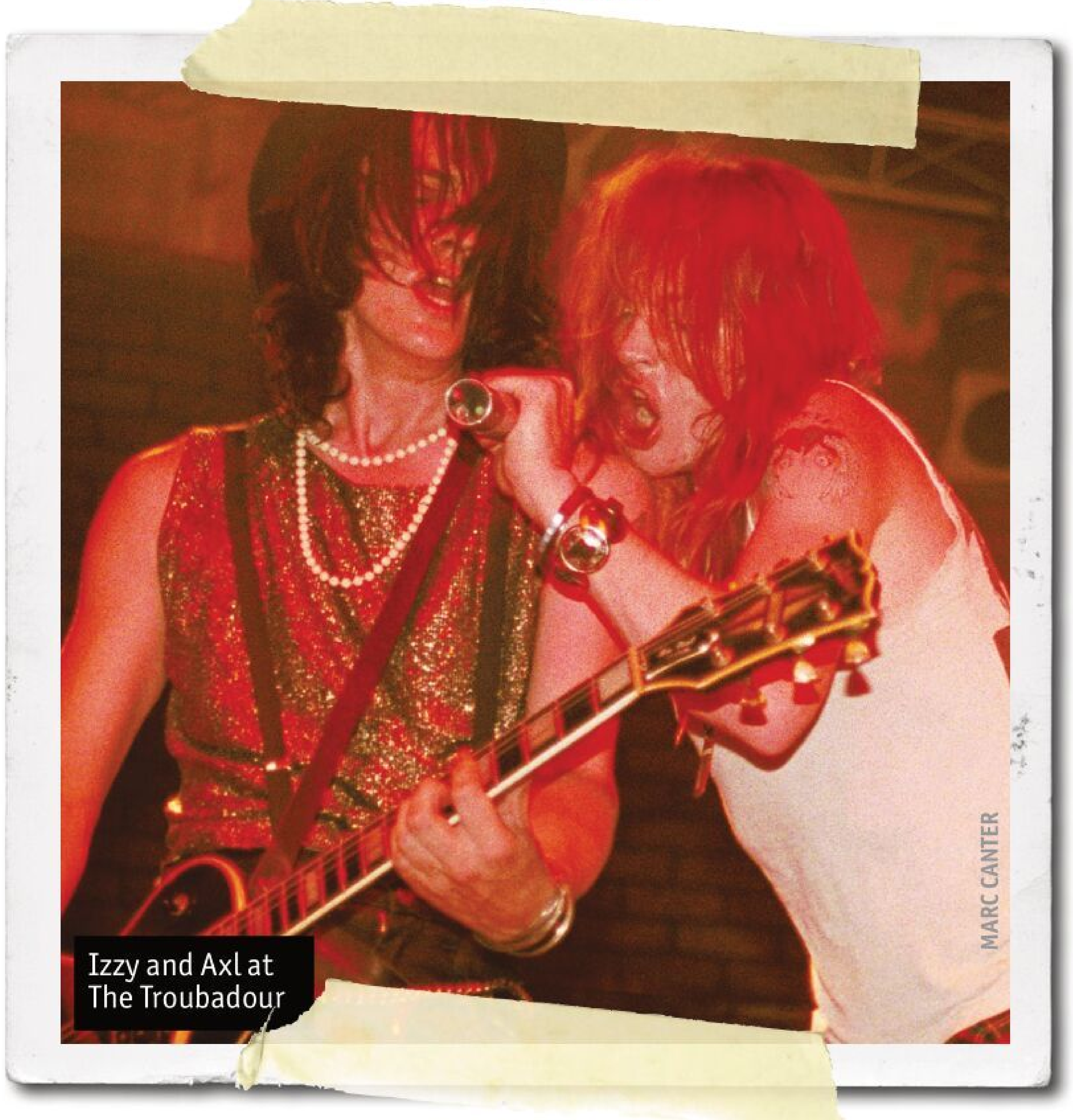
The song rattles to a halt and the singer – a rail-thin streak of sinew and rage with an explosion of flaming candy-floss hair and a tomcat's howl – opens his mouth. "You have to excuse me," he spits. "I haven't been asleep in 48 hours, I think. I am coming down on my fuckin' dope. So this next song is about getting too fuckin' high. This song is called *My Michelle*."

Welcome to Hollywood, baby.

Thirty years on, such scenes have slipped from reality into myth. But Guns N' Roses were all too real. They waltzed with the Devil down Sunset Strip, danced with Mr Brownstone in long-vanished clubs, and rose above Hollywood on a pillar of flame that would go on to engulf the world. They were – and still are – the great leveller, a seminal force in rock and metal's evolution over the past three decades.

"WHEN PEOPLE TOLD US, 'DO IT LIKE THIS,' WE'D GO, 'FUCK YOU, WE'RE GONNA DO IT LIKE *THAT*'"

STEVEN ADLER



Izzy and Axl at The Troubadour

MARC CANTER

Ask any musician from any band in any genre, and they'll pretty much all tell you how important Guns N' Roses are to them. In terms of music, in terms of attitude, in terms of lifestyle.

"Guns N' Roses is my favourite band of all time," says M Shadows of Avenged Sevenfold. "I love that band. You can compare us all you want – they're a huge reason why I'm in a band, and even write music. My dad gave me *Appetite For Destruction* when it came out."

"The first time I heard Guns N' Roses, I instantly fell in love," offers Asking Alexandria axeman Ben Bruce. "It was just the perfect recipe. Everything about Guns was dangerous and exciting; they were the living embodiment of rock'n'roll in its truest form. They turned heads across the globe and wrote one of the best albums of all time."

Shadows and Ben would be the first to admit that they're standing on the shoulders of giants. Guns N' Roses didn't invent rock'n'roll or carnage, but they perfected it. At their cliché-defying best – that is, at any point between 1985, when they formed, and 1991, when they got so big and bloated you could see them from space – they truly were the most dangerous band in the world. "We were a train wreck," says original drummer Steven Adler today. "But you couldn't take your eyes off us."

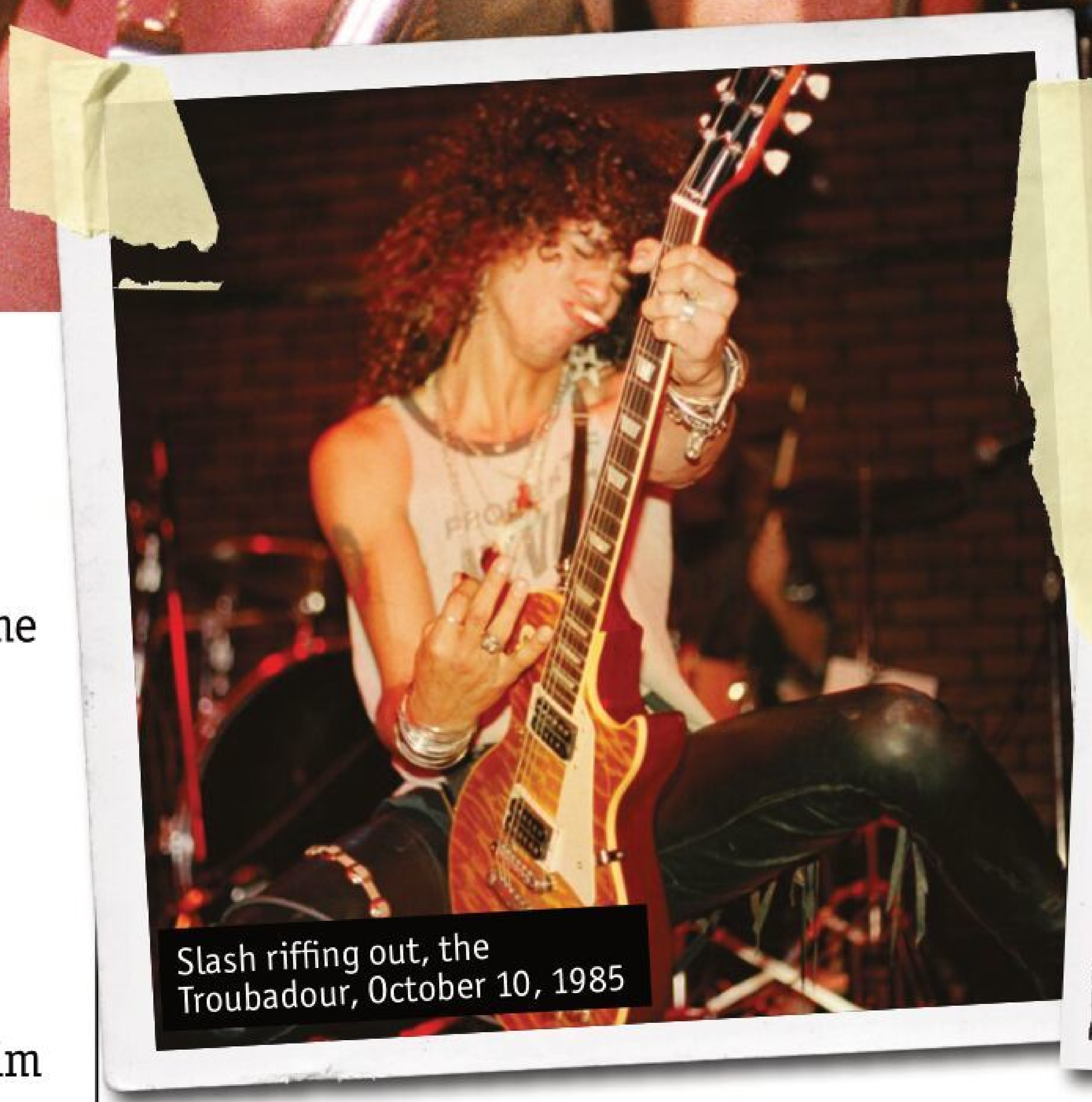
Guns N' Roses still exist, of course, though in radically different form. While Axl Rose would disagree, they're overshadowed by their own legend. But even legends have to begin somewhere.

Guns N' Roses was built on chaos. In late 1982, a 20-year-old kid from the hick city of Indiana named Bill Bailey arrived in Los Angeles in search of fame, fortune or anything in-between.

One of the first people he met

MARC CANTER

Guns rock the Country Club, October 18, 1985


Slash riffing out, the Troubadour, October 10, 1985

in Los Angeles was another Indiana transplant, an old schoolfriend and budding guitarist named Jeff Isbell. Within a few months, both had renamed themselves: Bill Bailey became Axl Rose and Jeff Isbell became Izzy Stradlin.

Axl was a bundle of trouble, even as a kid. "I remember, the first day at school there was this big fucking commotion," Izzy later recalled. "I heard all these books hit the ground, yelling, and then he went running past. A bunch of fucking teachers chasing him down the hallway..."

At the same time as the young Axl was giving his teachers the finger, at a different school 2000 miles away two of his future bandmates were plotting their own dreams of rock'n'roll stardom. Steven Adler was a pupil at Bancroft High, just off Santa Monica Boulevard in LA. An aspiring drummer, Adler befriended an English-born, mixed-race kid named Saul Hudson. It would be a few years before Saul started calling himself Slash. But he was already on the way.

"He was one of the cool kids," says Steven now, his slurred voice the result of a series of strokes and heart attacks brought on by a lifetime of hardcore drug abuse (though he's currently clean). "I gave him his first guitar when he was 12 years old. He was writing songs a week later. We started ditching school three weeks into knowing him. We'd walk up and down Sunset, Santa Monica and Hollywood Boulevard, and that guitar went everywhere with him."

For all that, it was years before they actually played in a band together. The Sunset Strip scene of the late 70s and early 80s was basically a collection of random musicians joining each others' bands for a few weeks or months at a time, then moving on to something else. It wasn't until the middle of 1984, when Adler joined Slash's band Roadcrew, that the pair finally teamed up. Even then, they both had a firm eye on the competition.

"You'd walk up and down Sunset and see all these flyers everywhere," says Steven. "Me and Slash were hanging out at the Rainbow and we saw this one flyer on the sidewalk and picked it up. The guitar player and singer looked really cool, so we went to see them at Gazarri's."

The guitarist was Izzy Stradlin, the singer was Axl Rose, and their band was called Hollywood Rose – or maybe just Rose, depending on what they decided to put on their flyers. The two parties hooked up, played a few gigs... then fell apart. Slash joined a band called Black Sheep. Izzy joined perpetual no-hopers London. Axl teamed up with a guitarist named Tracii Guns in LA Guns. In April 1985, the latter would change their name to reflect their two key members: Guns N' Roses.

By June 1985, Tracii Guns was out and Slash, Izzy and Adler were all back in, as was a beanpole bass player from Seattle named Duff McKagan. This soon-to-be-classic lineup bonded over a trip to Seattle, which started with their car breaking down 25 miles outside of LA and ended with them unsuccessfully trying to burn down the actual venue they were playing in.

Their chief role models were the big beasts of the 1970s: Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, the classic icons of the

"WE SAT THERE FOR THREE WEEKS, DOING DRUGS, LISTENING TO LED ZEPPELIN AND FUCKING"

AXL ROSE

MARC CANTER

Guns N' Roses debut *Rocket Queen* at the Troubadour, September 20, 1985

Duff strutting his stuff, Stardust Ballroom, August 30, 1985

MARC CANTER

tight-trousered titans who laid down the foundation stone for arena rock and heavy metal. But there was no bloat here: Guns N' Roses were street punks in rock stars' clothing.

"We always read in magazines how they did it their way," remembers Steven. "We figured that we'd do it *our* way, and fuck everybody else. When people told us, 'Do it like this,' we'd go, 'Fuck you, we're gonna do it like *that*.' We were not going to take any shit from anybody."

Vicky Hamilton would play a key part in the early development of the band that would become GN'R, first as their booker and then as their manager.

She was working at a booking agency and managing various hopeful bands when Axl and Izzy introduced themselves to her.

"Axl said, 'Can we come in and play you a demo?'" she recalls now. "I was, like, 'No, put it in the mail to me.' 'Well, we want to bring it in and play it.' 'Well, I don't have a stereo.' And Axl went, 'That's okay, I'll just bring a ghetto blaster.' They played me the demo, and it was unbelievable. I'd worked with Poison, Stryper, Mötley Crüe. But this was a different animal. It felt a lot more dangerous. They felt like outlaws."

Next to a bunch of pampered poodles like Poison, Guns N' Roses were a pack of feral dogs. The two bands hated each other. They would paper over each others' flyers until telephone poles were inches thick. "Lock me in a room with Poison, and there's only gonna be one person walking out," spat Axl.

Even early on, Axl was a unique figure. "He had his issues," says Steven. "But he had this real charismatic, Jim Morrison kind of aura around him. One minute you're in love with him, the next you're going, 'What the fuck does that mean?'"

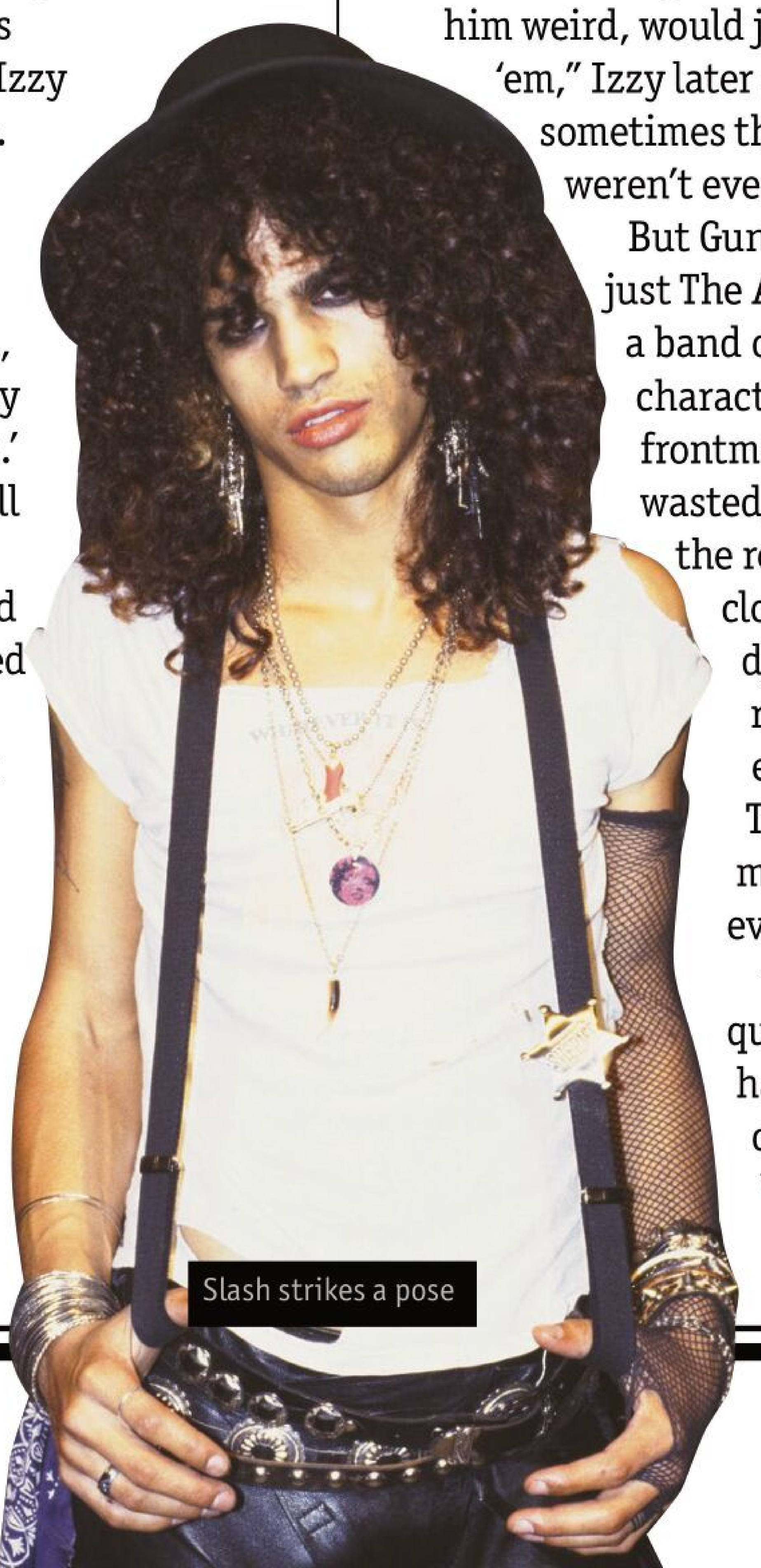
It was a constant game to see who would end up on the receiving end of the singer's hair-trigger temper. "Axl used to be one of those guys who, if he even thought someone was looking at him weird, would just haul off and smack 'em," Izzy later recalled. "And sometimes the people he went for weren't even looking at him."

But Guns N' Roses was far from just The Axl Rose Show. This was a band of five distinct characters: the volatile frontman in Axl, the elegantly wasted, top hat-sporting Slash, the relentlessly eager, clown-ish Adler; dyed-in-the-wool punk rocker Duff; the effortlessly cool Izzy. The latter was the mystery component, even to his bandmates.

"Izzy was very quiet and he only had a small circle of friends," recalls Vicky Hamilton. "His

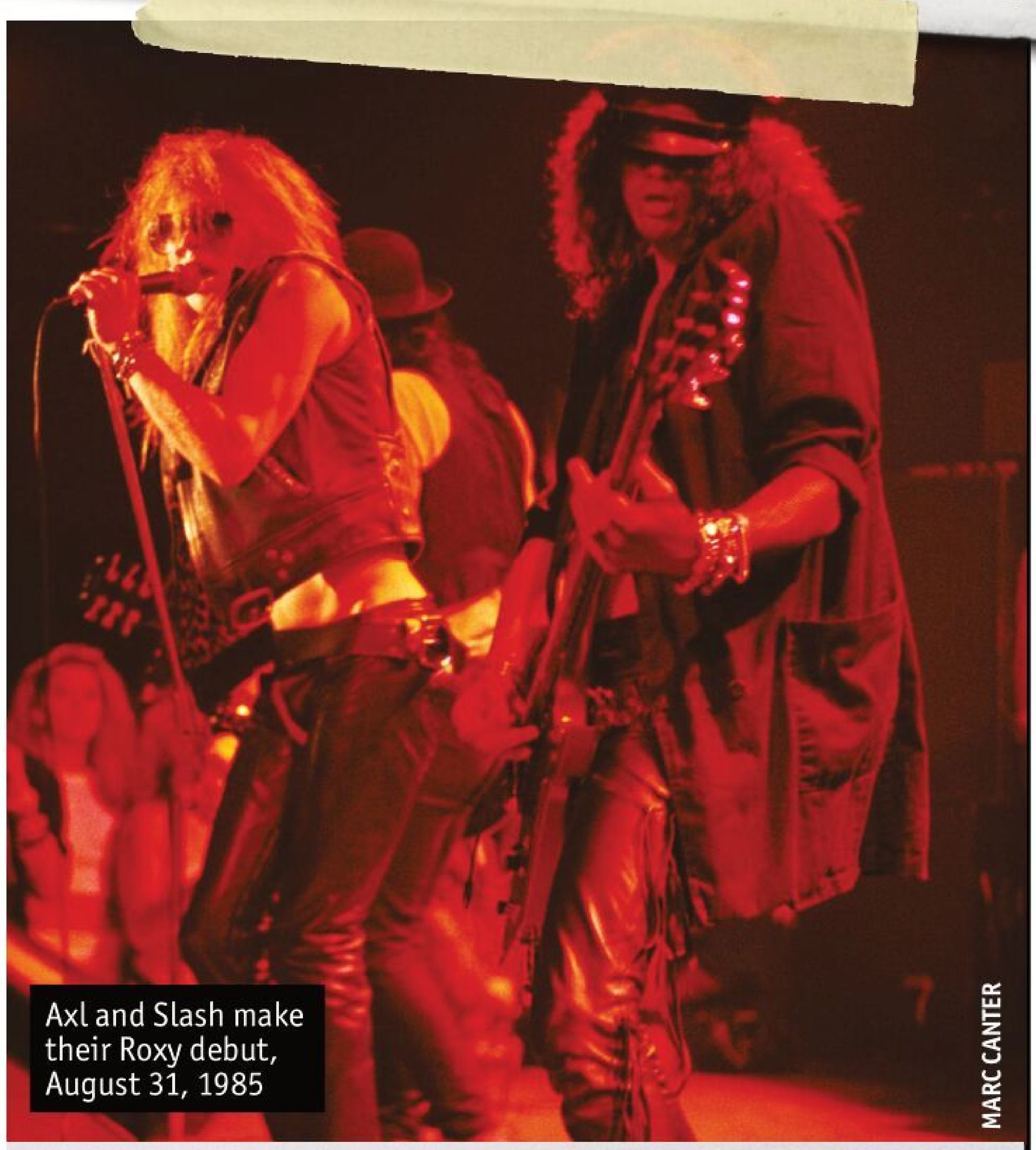
"WE WERE A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN. THEN IT WENT STRAIGHT TO HELL"

STEVEN ADLER



SLASH: JACK LUE/ATLASICONS.COM

Slash strikes a pose



Axl and Slash make their Roxy debut, August 31, 1985

MARC CANTER

JACK LUE/ATLASICONS.COM

Once upon a time, these guys were friends. Somewhere in Hollywood, 1985

TONY MOTTRAM/RETNA

SETLIST

1. Welcome to the Jungle
2. Out Ta Get Me
3. Rocket Queen
4. Nightrain
5. My Michelle
6. It's So Easy
7. Mr. Brownstone
8. Don't Cry
9. You're Crazy
10. Paradise City
11. Whole Lotta Rosie (AC/DC cover)
12. Knockin' on Heaven's Door (Bob Dylan cover)
13. Encore:
13. Move to the City
14. Mama Kin

LONDON CALLING

ON JUNE 28, 1987, GN'R MADE THEIR FIRST SERIOUS SPLASH IN FOREIGN WATERS AT LONDON'S LEGENDARY MARQUEE CLUB, AND *MALCOLM DOME* WAS THERE TO SEE IT ALL GO DOWN.

The crowds were gathering outside the Marquee from noon on what was the final night of Guns N' Roses' three-show stint at the famed London club. By now, there was a massive buzz of expectation about this lot. The band's first trip to London might have begun with people slightly cynical about these new great hopes from Los Angeles, but there was little argument that it was ending with everyone in attendance convinced that they'd be a major force.

Slash and Duff spent much of the afternoon across the road from the Marquee, sitting on the steps of a pub, soaking up the sun and beer, amazed at how the queue for a gig still several hours away was growing every minute.

"How many people can fit inside that place?" asked the incredulous guitarist.

"In years to come, several thousand people are gonna claim they were here tonight," butted in band manager Alan Niven. "Guys, trust me, this is where a legend is born!"

"IT WAS THE LAST TIME WE'D SEE THE MOST DANGEROUS BAND IN THE WORLD IN SUCH A SMALL LOCATION"

Whether Niven truly believed his outrageous comment, the fact remains that, in hindsight, he was right. This was where the myth of Guns N' Roses took flight. By the time the band came onstage, the Marquee was swamped in a fever. Everyone acknowledged it would be the last time we'd see the Most Dangerous Band In The World in such a small location, and when they burst on with *Welcome To The Jungle*, the place went into absolute meltdown.

Axl strutted across the tiny stage, wearing a t-shirt bearing the phrase 'Opinions Are Like Assholes, Everyone's Got One' – a riposte to a less-than-flattering review of the just-released *Appetite For Destruction*. He was utterly electrifying, with no hint of the twisted anger that would subsequently go on to dog his performances.

The rest of Guns N' Roses were also equal to the occasion. They roared through a set based mostly around *Appetite*..., although there was an early taste of *Don't Cry*, which wouldn't be released for four more years, and they finished the set with sparkling covers of AC/DC's *Whole Lotta Rosie* and Bob Dylan's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*, the former especially given a breathtaking shake-up, before encoring with *Move To The City*, featured on the *Live ?!*@ Like A Suicide* EP, and Aerosmith's classic *Mama Kin* – a track they would later get to play live on stage with the mighty Aerosmith themselves.

After the show, there were a lot of dazed and delirious people milling about. Not least at the band's impromptu post-gig party, held at their apartment.

"Were we OK?" Axl asked them anxiously.

OK? It was the birth of a legend.

Guns – complete with Slash using his trusty Les Paul for the first time – at Street Scene, September 28, 1985

RECKLESS ABANDON

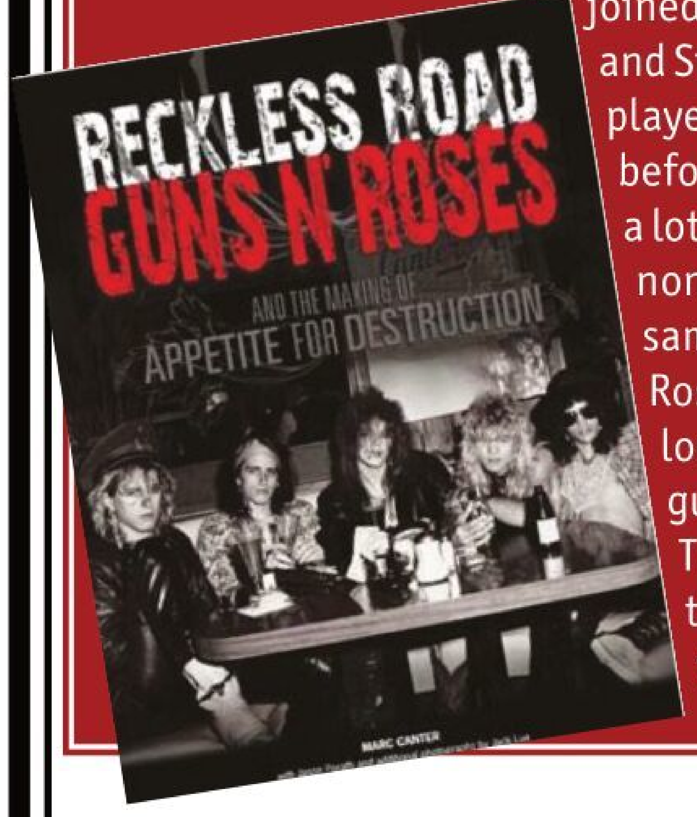
Marc Canter, pro-photographer and the man behind classic Guns photo-bio *Reckless Road*, talks about life in the fast lane with rock'n'roll's most chaotic sons.

WHERE DID YOU MEET SLASH?
"We went to the same elementary school together. A few years later, I had a motorbike and he was thinking of taking it. Then he looked at me and went, 'Wait, we were at school'. Instead of stealing it, he made friends with me. We used to go out on BMXs together."

WHEN DID YOU START SHOOTING HIM?
"I started going to rehearsals for his first band, Tidus Sloan. I saw right away that he was really good at what he was doing. But he was good at riding bikes as well. He did tricks that were way ahead of their time!"

HIS NEXT BAND WAS ROADCREW. WHAT WERE THEY LIKE?
"It was basically an extension of Tidus Sloan, except with a singer. The riffs and the solos were good, but the vocals and the melodies weren't there. The person they had singing didn't really have what it takes. It was just another guitar band, but it was cool because it had Slash in it."

IN 1985, SLASH JOINED FORCES WITH A NEW BAND CALLED GUNS N' ROSES...
"Slash was in a band called Black Sheep. When Tracii Guns quit Guns N' Roses, the rest of them joined back with Slash and Steven, who had played with them a year before. There were a lot of bands, but none of them had the same feel as Guns N' Roses. They had the look, the sound, the guitar-playing. They just had the charisma to take it far."



humour was very cynical. He was early on the drug path. He was already going to rehab before those guys even started."

Their individual personalities fed into the songs they were writing. By the end of 1985, half the songs that would make it onto *Appetite For Destruction* were in their set.

"When we first started, none of us were perfect at playing, apart from maybe Slash," admits Steven. "But it was something we really enjoyed doing, and that was more important than getting great at playing. It was a match made in heaven. Then it went right to hell."

In most bands, there's a 'sensible one'. Guns N' Roses weren't most bands. They had five distinctly insensible ones. According to Steven, the closest they did had to a steady hand was him, which shows just how fucked-up things were.

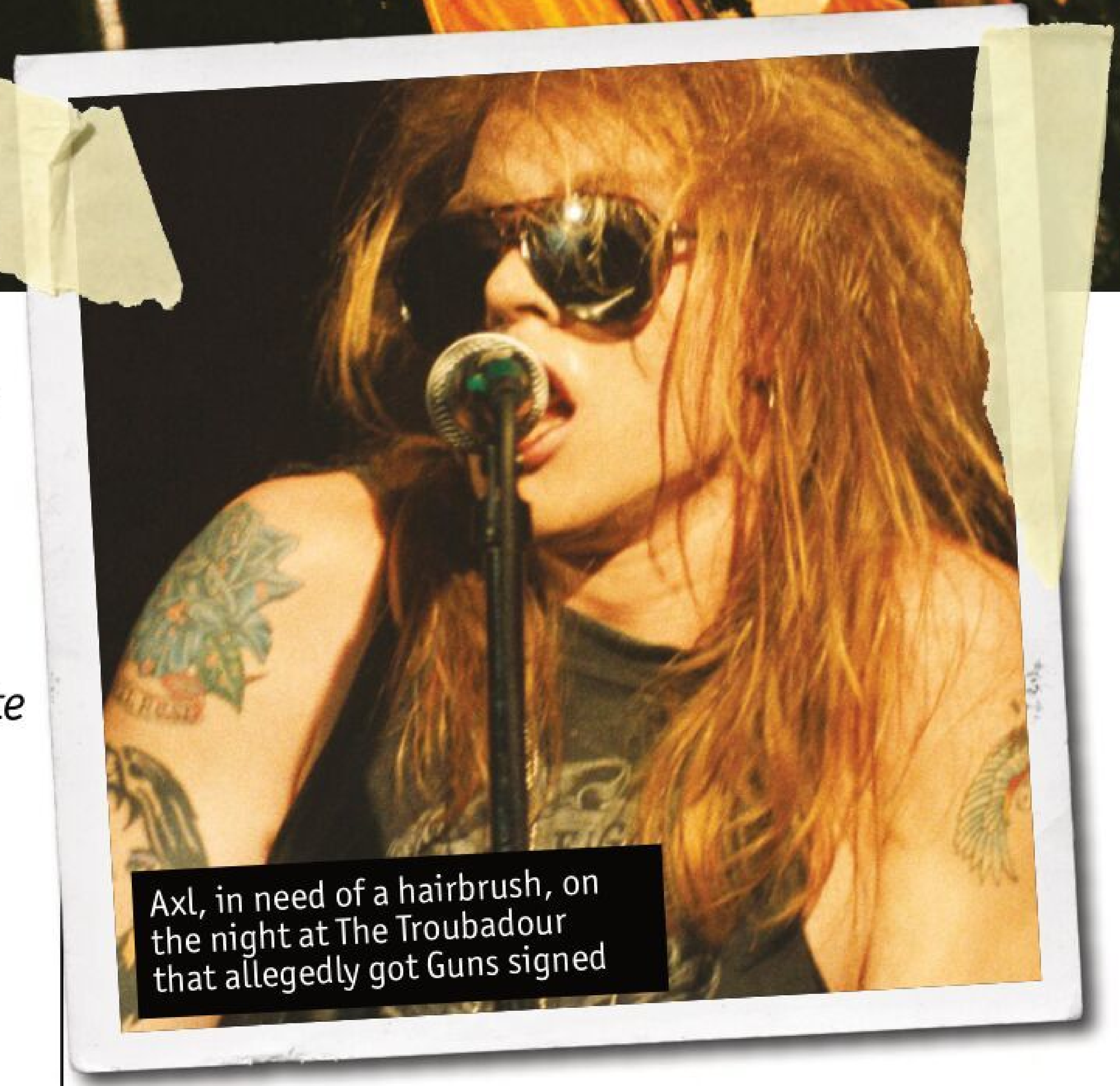
"Man, *I* was the sensible one," he laughs. "I was the one saying, 'Come on, this is our dream coming true, let's not throw it away.' The whole thing was this crazy, out-of-control monster."

"I GOT THEM A RECORD DEAL, AND THEY GOT ME EVICTED"

FIRST MANAGER VICKY HAMILTON

In reality, the soberest member of the band was Axl. Although 'sober' is a relative term. "I don't abstain from doing drugs, but I won't allow myself to have a fuckin' habit," he told writer Del James in 1989. "I'll have done blow [cocaine] for three days and my mind will go, 'Fuck no.' I'll just refuse to do coke that day. The same thing with heroin. I did it for three weeks straight… with a girl I wanted to be with, and we just sat there listening to Led Zeppelin, doing drugs and fucking. I stopped on Saturday because I had serious business to attend to on Monday. I can't hide in drugs."

His advice to would-be druggies was "don't get a habit, don't use anybody else's needle and don't let drugs become a prerequisite to



Axl, in need of a hairbrush, on the night at The Troubadour that allegedly got Guns signed

having a good time." Unfortunately, his bandmates weren't listening. Slash and Izzy were full-on junkies, and Adler was coming up fast on the inside. Duff, on the other hand, was a borderline alcoholic, presumably just to be different.

"I love the guy a lot, but the fact is Slash is not what you'd call your thinkin' man's drug-user," Izzy said of his fellow guitarist. "He's real careless, doing really shitty things like OD-ing in other people's apartments. A lot."

Sex was arguably even higher on their list of priorities, at least for some members. "The concept of safe sex didn't exist before then," said Slash. "I was running around, dick wet from one pussy going into another."

The gloves were off when it came to sexual competition between the fivesome too, with various women flying through the ranks. The band would have contests to see who could get the most blowjobs in one day. "I won that every time," boasts Steven now. "It didn't matter if you were hard or not. If she put it in her mouth, that counted. My record was 13 in a day. Lucky 13."

Nor were any of them worried about the spectre of AIDS – the big sexual bogeyman of the day. "I've been tested for AIDS a few

JACK LUE/ATLASICONS.COM

Izzy and Duff onstage in 85

MARC CANTER

Jamming at The Troubadour, September 20, 1985

MARC CANTER/ATLASICONS.COM

Hanging with Geffen's Tom Zutaut (in white), the man who'd sign them

"STRIPPERS WERE OUR SUSTENANCE FOR THE LONGEST TIME. WE CRASHED AT STRIPPERS' HOUSES"

SLASH

times," admitted Slash at the time. "But honestly, the first time I was tested I didn't care about the result in terms of my own mortality. I was more concerned about the fact that if it was positive, I wouldn't be able to get laid for however long it took for me to kick the bucket."

The sexual charge that fired the band crackled onstage, too. Hollywood wasn't short of strippers, many of whom were befriended by the band. Performances would be enhanced by dancers who were in various states of undress.

The girls had another use, too. Some of them would take band members under their wings, and sometimes into their beds. Given that your average stripper earned far more than most struggling musicians, it guaranteed them a warm meal and a hot shower alongside any other perks that may have, ahem, arisen.

"Strippers were our sustenance for the longest time," recalled Slash of that era. "We crashed at the strippers' houses and that's where we got extra cash."

When they weren't enjoying the mothering instincts of LA's finest exotic dancers, the band lived in a loft in their rehearsal room. It was freezing cold and there was no plumbing. They would light bonfires in the car park. They were effectively homeless people in leather trousers.

In the autumn of 1985, Vicky Hamilton got a call from Slash. "Can Axl stay on your couch for a little while?" he asked. "The cops are looking for him." The singer had been accused of a sexual assault, and they were basically on the run from the law [the charges were later dropped].

"I said, 'Oh boy, okay, for a couple of days,'" she says. "What was supposed to be a couple of days ended up being six months. It started with Axl on my couch, and then a few days later the rest of the band moved their gear in."

Her one-bedroom apartment just off the Sunset Strip became the epicentre of the carnage. At any given time, there would be anything between eight and 20 people in the place: five musicians, assorted roadies, various girlfriends and any number of one-night stands. It wasn't so much a home as an animal house. But even then there was a pecking order.

"Axl was always on the couch and the rest would be in sleeping bags in the pretend-dining room," says Vicky. "They were terrible house guests. My roommate and I would barricade ourselves in the bedroom."

It was Hamilton who helped Guns N' Roses to the next level. She passed on a tape to Tom Zutaut, superstar A&R man with Geffen Records. Zutaut had spotted Mötley Crüe and turned them into superstars.

He planned to do the same with Guns. On February 28, 1986, he saw them for the first time at The Troubadour nightclub. Less than a month later, he had signed them to Geffen for a $75,000 advance.

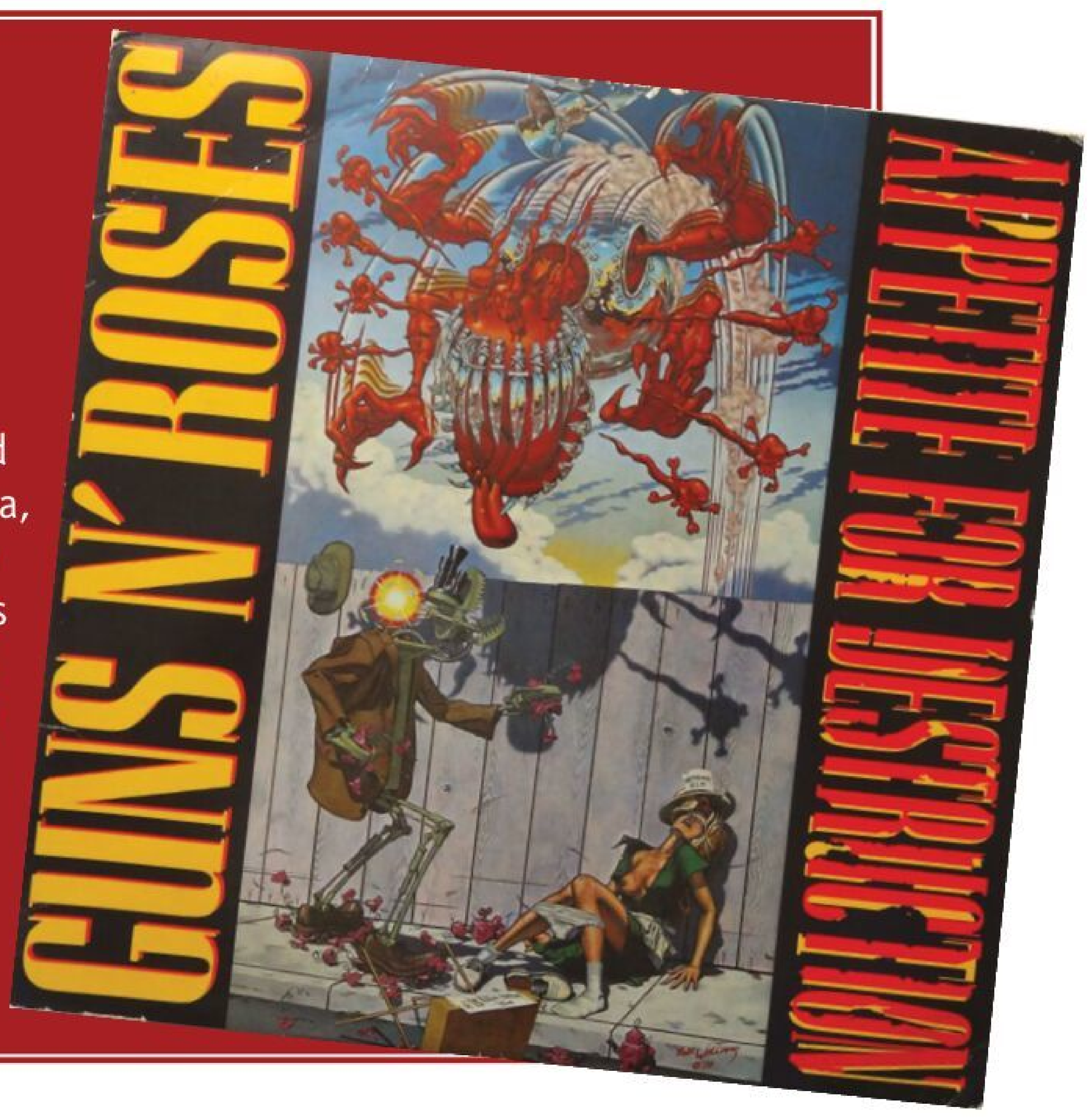
Not that the deal doused the band's fire. On the day they were due to sign with Geffen, Axl and Steven got into a fight at Vicky's

JACK

DRAW POWER

Even GN'R's artwork caused a fuss...

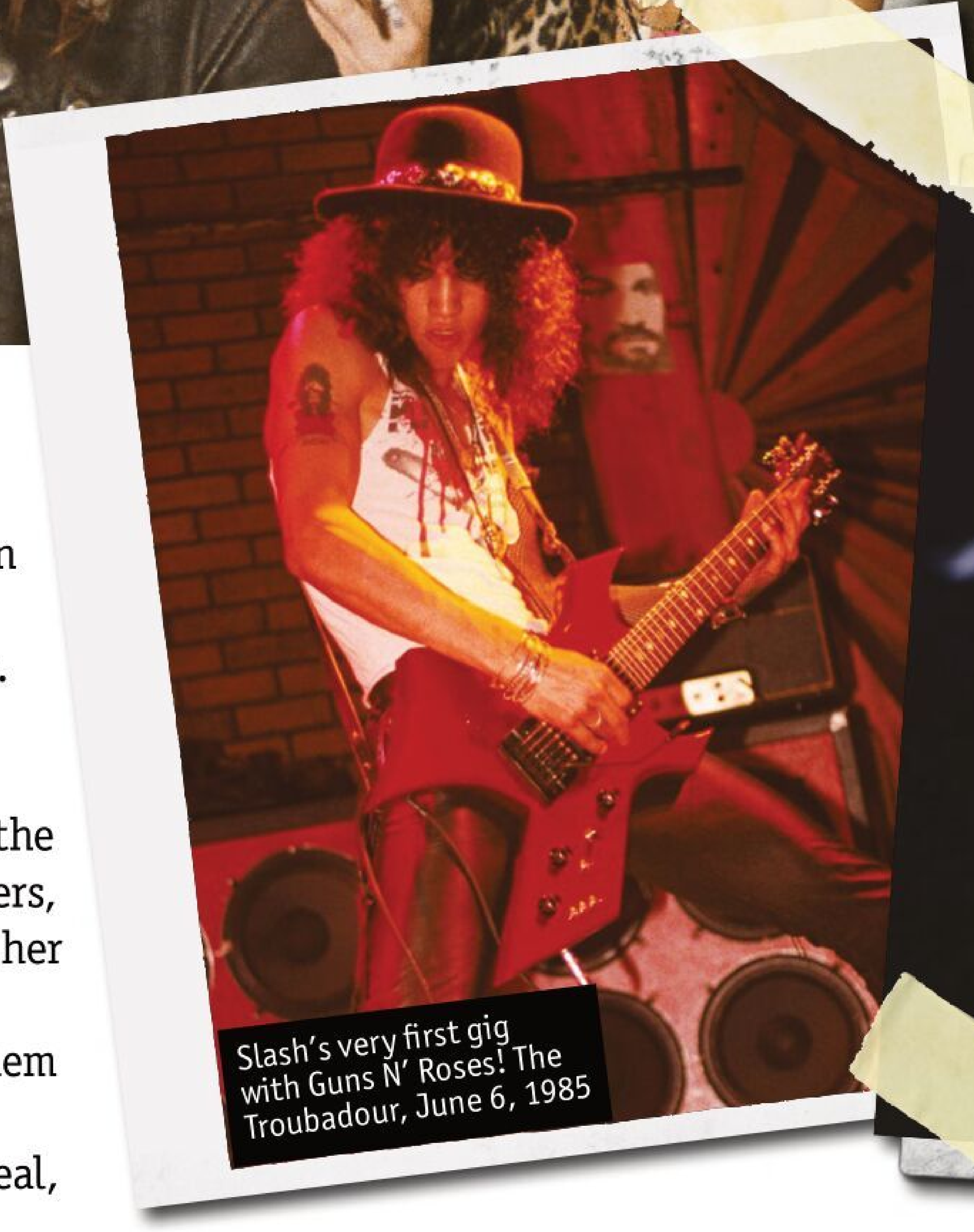
When Guns sought out a suitably chaotic and controversial art piece to grace the cover of *Appetite For Destruction*, they settled on the work of Robert Williams, whose depiction of psychedelica, post-apocalyptic mayhem and, er, rapey robots had gained him notoriety amongst the Hollywood elite. The resulting piece was rejected by numerous retailers, causing Geffen to use Robert's piece as an inlet, replacing it with the iconic cross image which would become a staple throughout Guns' early career. Robert would remain unapologetic about his work. "My paintings are not designed to entertain you," he argues. "They are meant to trap you, to hold you before them while you try to rationalise what elements of the picture are making you stand there."



JACK LUE/ATLASICONS.COM

NEIL ZLOZOWER/ATLASICONS.COM

Struggling to play it straight on a shoot in '85



Slash's very first gig with Guns N' Roses! The Troubadour, June 6, 1985

Axl and Slash at the iconic Whisky A Go Go in 87

apartment. It was a big one.

"Axl wouldn't go to Geffen Records down the street and sign the deal," says Steven. "I was pissed at him, and we got into it. Just destroyed the place. It was fucking crazy."

It was also the final straw for the apartment's long-suffering owners, who promptly evicted Vicky and her unruly house pests.

"My landlord was, like, 'Get them the fuck out of here,'" she says, laughing. "I got them a record deal, they got me evicted."

Guns N' Roses were too tightly bound to each other to let a fist-fight knock their accelerating juggernaut off course. "It was a gang mentality," insists Steven. "We were one for all, all for one. The three musketeers. Or the five musketeers." He laughs. "With guitars and a drumkit."

Geffen half-heartedly tried to tame them. Vicky Hamilton was replaced as manager by Alan Niven, and the band were moved into a shared hovel in an effort to fire their creativity.

The plan backfired when the quintet spent their advance on getting even more fucked up. The name they gave their new abode pretty much tells you all you need to know: The Hell House.

"A lot of crabs were transferred in that place," noted Slash years later.

"It was," added Duff McKagan, "a place where the whole sleaziness of the band could fester."

Their new paymasters managed to wrangle them into the studio to record their debut EP, the mock-live *Live ?!*@ Like A Suicide*: a four-track, 14-minute blast of sleaze and venom with crowd noises pilfered from 70s mega-festival the Texxas Jam.

Anyone unsure of where Guns N' Roses were coming from only needed to look at the titles of two of its songs: *Reckless Life* and a cover of *Nice Boys (Don't Play Rock'N'Roll)*.

What happened next has been cut-up, chewed over and regurgitated countless times down the years. Guns N' Roses recorded their debut album, *Appetite For Destruction*, with producer Mike Clink. Released in June 1987, it ultimately exploded like nothing ever had before it. By the end of 1988, it had sold in excess of ten million copies (today that figure stands at an impressive 18 million – the best-sellign debut album of all time).

Guns N' Roses weren't just the most dangerous band in the world. They were also the biggest. "We wanted to change the world," says Steven Adler. "And we did."

"WE WERE ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE. FIVE MUSKETEERS WITH GUITARS AND A DRUM KIT"

STEVEN ADLER

"Guns N' Roses are one of the last great rock 'n' roll bands," states Asking Alexandria's Ben Bruce with no shortness of conviction. "Everything from their attitudes and love of rock 'n' roll to their huge, anthemic songs and classic riffs have left a huge impact and will continue to do so for years to come."

That's true, but if you want to get to the heart of the matter – and to the heart of Guns N' Roses – just crank up *Appetite For Destruction* itself. It's not just one of the greatest records ever released, it's a document of a time, a place and a band that will never be repeated.

Now *that's* Hollywood, baby. ✠

MARC CANTER/ATLASICONS.COM

Steven and Slash, ahem, relax after a gig in 1986

Faith No More

From Out Of Nowhere

In 1989, hair metal still ruled and the grunge explosion was still a few years away. Enter five misfits from San Francisco who would rewrite the rules of rock with their breakthrough single.

Words: **Joel McIver**

Just before the 80s ended in an explosion of Aqua Net and spandex, Faith No More found themselves at a crossroads. While the San Francisco-based band had already released the albums *We Care A Lot* (1985) and *Introduce Yourself* (1987), relations between singer Chuck Mosley and the rest of the band – Roddy Bottum (keyboards), Jim Martin (guitar), Billy Gould (bass) and Mike Bordin (drums) – had soured, resulting in the vocalist being ousted.

"We were in a weird place at the time," Bottum recalls, "having just lost a singer. I think I felt it more than the others. I was pretty close to Chuck. We were taking stock and starting over, but the mood among the four of us was pretty optimistic."

The group soon had good reason to feel optimistic: the arrival of singer Mike Patton at the end of 1988. Shortly after the dawn of the 90s, Faith No More would be one of the world's top rock bands, with 1989's *The Real Thing* (their first album with Patton) and the single from it, the ground-breaking rap-metal track *Epic*, both scaling the charts. But initially, it was album opener *From Out Of Nowhere* that helped the band get back on track.

Bottum recalls that the music for that song was written before Patton joined the band: "Billy, Mike Bordin and I wrote that song together at our rehearsal space in Hunter's Point. It was among the first batch of songs that we wrote after Chuck left the band. Typically, the three of us would get the skeleton of a song going on, and then get Jim Martin to put his guitar part on. Sometimes, Billy would write [Martin's] guitar part for him, but I think in the case of *From Out Of Nowhere*, he wrote his own part."

But Bottum does admit that Patton lent a major hand in how the song eventually came out: "[Patton] came in and did the melody and the lyrics. All of the music of the songs on *The Real Thing* was written prior to Mike joining the band. He sat with the songs for a couple of weeks and wrote all his vocal parts. Really fast."

"We tracked a cassette demo of *From Out Of Nowhere* in the rehearsal room," adds Gould. "Mike Patton took it home and worked on the melody and the lyrics then he would come to my house and we'd put the parts down on four-track to hone them down. The majority of the lyrics and singing melody was from him."

There has been some debate over the years concerning exactly what the song is about. This is made evident by the fact that Bottum and Patton's explanations of the lyrics appear to differ wildly. While Bottum reckons the song "seems to be about a chance meeting, and how chance plays a role in interaction". Patton explains it as: "Jello shots, hermetic philosophy, Ptolemaic cosmology… you know, your average commie/junkie jibber-jabber." So that's cleared up then.

In the 80s, keyboards in heavy metal were relegated to almost exclusively to the odd power ballad. By contrast. Faith No More were one of the first metal bands to use keyboards for texture – which is demonstrated clearly on *From Out Of Nowhere*.

When it came to actually record the song, the band were well-prepared. Looking back, however, Patton's memories are more than just a bit fuzzy: "I have no recollection of recording the song," he says. "But I'm sure it was nothing short of a full-scale hootenanny."

Bottum, on the other hand, recalls the sessions (at Sausalito's Studio D) as being "a weird, 'getting to know each other' time with Patton. We all got along and worked together pretty easily. Everyone was pretty proactive in the studio. Jim Martin was becoming very particular about his guitar sound, I remember that. "

Indeed, Martin had become quite particular about his guitar sound. The guitarist recalls at the time consulting two renowned names in the rock world for advice – producer Rick Rubin and Metallica's James Hetfield.

Due to the fast pace and intensity of From Out Of Nowhere, as well as opening the album, it also served as the opening number for the mammoth tour in support of *The Real Thing*, which lasted from '89 through to '91.

"That song was so good because most of our stuff was mid-tempo that the set was always in danger of dragging," Gould explains. "With that one we could at least start things on a high note, and hopefully this spark would keep the rest of the set alive. There's nothing worse than being on stage for 80 minutes or so when things are not working correctly. Generally it seemed to work out well, and we stuck with it as an opener until with hated it so much we scrapped it from the set altogether."

The bassist also recalls how the song put the audience over the top at one gig: "I remember playing in London for, like, the millionth time on that tour. We were pretty popular in England, but hadn't really taken off at all in the US, and all our American label people came to London to our show to see what all the hubbub was about. We opened with that song, and the crowd went bananas and broke through the barrier between the stage and audience. We had to stop the song midway through because people were getting hurt. We left the stage, and came back after the barrier was rebuilt. The American label were aghast."

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
Oct 30, 1989
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
No.23 (UK)
PERSONNEL
Mike Patton
Vocals
Jim Martin
Guitar
Billy Gould
Bass
Roddy Bottum
Keyboards
Mike Bordin
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Billy Gould, Roddy Bottum, Mike Patton
PRODUCER
Matt Wallace
LABEL
Slash/Reprise

EBET ROBERTS/GETTY

'We were in a weird place at the time, having just lost a singer. We were taking stock and starting over, but the mood was pretty optimistic.'

Faith No More in 1989 (l-r): Jim Martin, Mike Patton, Roddy Bottum, Mike Bordin (front), Billy Gould.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT

1990-1999

METALLICA EXPLODED, NU METAL RULED AND THE FREAKS CAME OUT TO PLAY. WELCOME TO THE DECADE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING.

BACK IN BLACK

It was the record that transformed **Metallica** from the world's most uncompromising rock band into merely the biggest. Now, a decade on, the band speak honestly for the first time about the 'Black' album. Asking the million-dollar questions: Jon Hotten.

GETTY IMAGES

"Waddya mean I'll have to re-learn to play drums?!" But for the 'Black' album Lars spent weeks doing just that.

It's some time in 1988, almost midnight UK time, and Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich is on the phone from San Francisco. It's his first appointment of the day in promoting Metallica's new album, *And Justice For All*. But there's a problem with that famously voluble Danish mouth. In fact I can barely make out what he's saying.

"Man, I've got terrible toothache…" Lars mumbles.

"You what?"

"No joke, I've got to get to a dentist. I'll call you back."

Yeah, right.

Except he does. Two hours later, with me slumped red-eyed by the phone, Lars rings back.

"Hey, it's Lars…"

Except it sounded more like, "Hey, id Lards…" A Frisco mouth mechanic had slammed in some novocaine, drilled a few holes and sent him home with a gobful of blood and cotton wool. And the first thing Lars does is… ring back to talk about his new album.

The point being that Lars Ulrich is a singularly determined man. He may not be – and certainly wasn't then – the greatest drummer ever to pick up sticks. He may not be the guy you'd choose to get trapped in a lift with. But if you need somebody for whole-hearted, one-eyed and over-arching devotion to the cause, then Lars Ulrich's your man. He is a giver of the fabled 110 per cent – bad teeth or no bad teeth.

The, frankly, uneven …*And Justice For All* record that Lars was so keen to talk about was a big record. Big enough for most bands to kill for. It reached No.6 on the US *Billboard* Hot 100 and sold more than six million copies worldwide. But despite the tangible signs of success – fast cars, flash houses – and the rhetoric of their interviews, Metallica knew that …*Justice*… was not really good enough at all.

"After listening to the …*Justice*… album it was pretty apparent that we needed some guidance," James Hetfield later admitted wryly. It was "obvious," he said, who'd produced the record. The guitar and drum parts were disastrously high in the mix. "I'm not knocking it. It was right at the time. But the drums are really loud and the guitars are really loud. That'll be me and Lars, then."

Metallica and their new management team at Q-Prime – Peter Mensch and Cliff Bernstein – realised that the inherent problem with …*Justice*… was that the band had attracted a wide new fanbase. If they presented them next with a record that replicated its nine-minute songs, its dusty sound, the law of diminishing returns would apply. If Metallica were to advance and go global they needed to shape up. Now.

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After a nine-month break in 1989, Metallica played nine shows in Europe to knock off the rust. The last of those was in Glasgow. Backstage afterwards, Lars and James made plans to meet in San Francisco in two weeks to start work on the new album. Lars handed James a cassette they called *The Riff Tape*. *The Riff Tape* did exactly what it said on the box. It was a collection of riffs that James, guitarist Kirk Hammett and bassist Jason Newsted had made during the 240-odd nights of the …*Justice*… tour. Its contents would form the basis of Metallica's next studio album.

Two weeks later, James found himself making the 30-minute drive each day to Ulrich's house in San Francisco, where Lars had installed a little eight-track demo studio to the property cut into the side of one of the city's famous hills.

The first riff on *The Riff Tape* was one that Hammett had come up with. "I tried to write the heaviest thing I could think of," Hammett said later. "I was all fired up." He certainly was. The riff in question would become the basis of what remains the band's most famous song, *Enter Sandman*.

Lars and James worked until they had seven songs in rough demo form. Some, like Hammett's riff, had neither lyrics nor a title, some had titles, some had titles and the odd lyric. Hetfield would improvise vocal melodies by mixing snatches of song titles and ideas with 'Ooooh's and 'Wooaaah's.

"The way it works," Lars explained, "is James and I sit with a big list of song titles and throw them at each other. We might pick one that will work with a specific guitar part. Others that don't catch straight away we just leave on the list."

With the songs on the tape demoed, things were about to change more radically.

"We're Metallica. No one produces us; no one fucks with our shit and tells us what to do."

Lars Ulrich

"They had to make an out-of-the-box decision on how to make the next record," said Cliff Bernstein, reiterating Q-Prime's belief that Metallica simply had to go big with this one. "They had been used to doing things a certain way."

"We'd never really liked the mixing on …*Justice, Master Of Puppets* or *Ride The Lightning*," Ulrich said at the time. "So we were thinking: 'Who can we get in to do the mixing?' We felt it was time to make a record with a huge, big, fat low end. And the best-sounding record like that in the last couple of years was [Mötley Crüe's] *Dr Feelgood*. So we told our manager: 'Call this guy and see if he wants to mix the record.'"

'THIS GUY' WAS BOB ROCK, A FORMER SMALL-TIME musician who had since hit it big as a producer. His speciality was rambunctious pop-rock which sounded fantastic pumping from a car radio. He'd turned the trick for Bon Jovi and Aerosmith, and had made Mötley Crüe sound like the world's greatest bar band. Rock was a fastidious perfectionist whose ear for music was a lot more finely tuned than some of his work suggested.

He was close friends with Bon Jovi guitarist Richie Sambora. While Bon Jovi were on a sabbatical, Sambora had approached him with a view to producing a solo album he had written. Rock was loathe to let a friend down, but he was intrigued by the Metallica proposal.

He'd booked a vacation with his family, and took off on a driving tour of the Grand Canyon still torn between the two projects. As he drove along he came across a Native American kid by the side of the road, miles from anywhere. Rock was amazed to see that he was wearing a Metallica T-shirt. Later he pulled into a desert filling station; a Metallica tune was on the radio. "Metallica were never on the radio," he recalled. "These were like signs I couldn't ignore."

Rock got back to Q-Prime and said that he wasn't interested in mixing the Metallica album. He wanted to produce it.

"Of course, we said: 'We're Metallica. No one produces us; no one fucks with our shit and tells us what to do,'" noted Lars. "But slowly, over the next few days, we thought maybe we should let our guard down and at least talk to the guy. Like, if his name really is Bob Rock, how bad can he be?"

James and Lars flew to Canada to meet with Bob Rock at his home in Vancouver. Lars: "We're sitting there saying: 'Well, Bob, we think that we've made some good albums, but this is three years later and we want to make a record that is really bouncy, really lively, just has a lot of groove to it.'

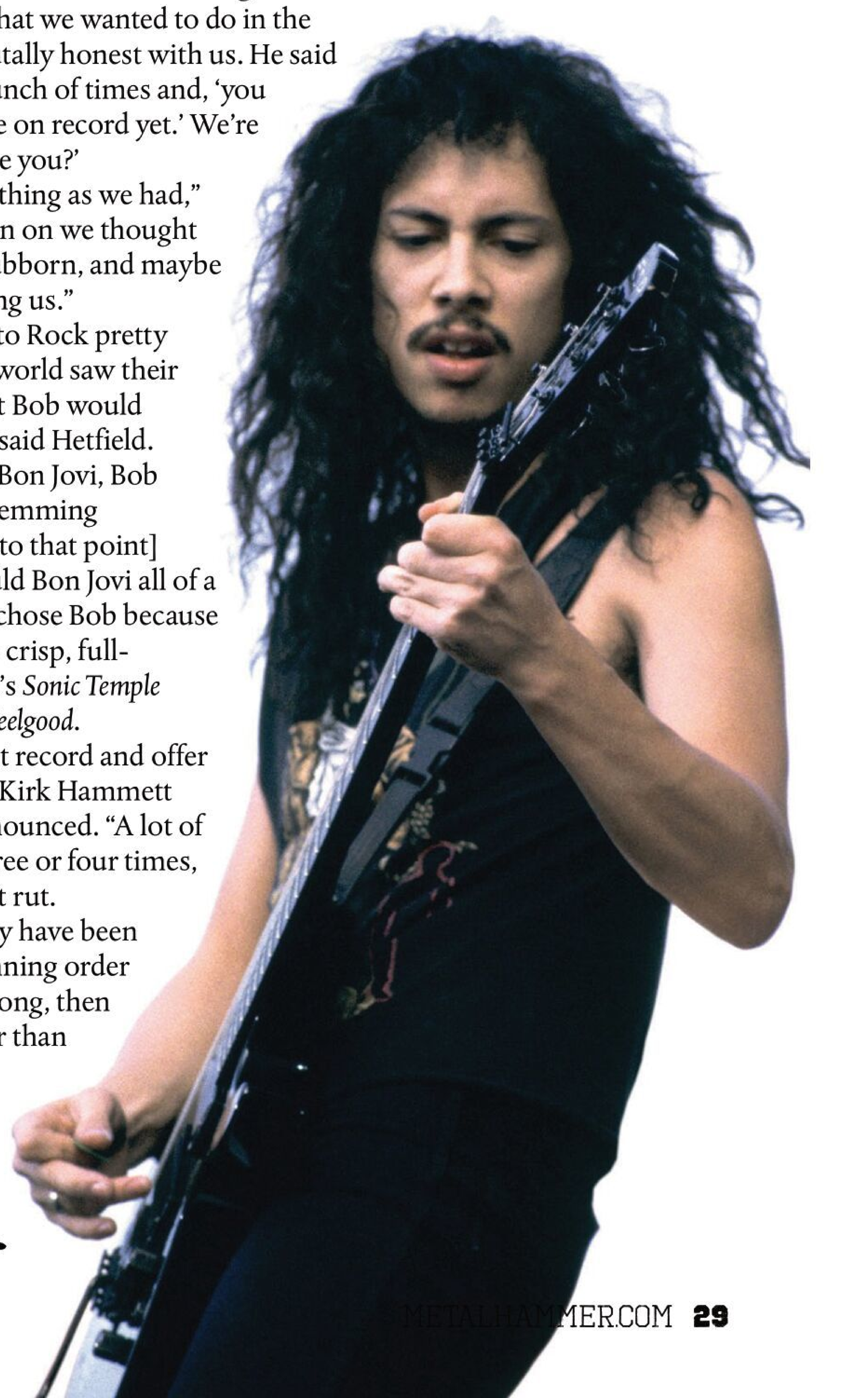
"We told him that live we have this great vibe, and that's what we wanted to do in the studio. He was brutally honest with us. He said he'd seen us play a bunch of times and, 'you guys have not captured what's live on record yet.' We're like: 'Excuse me? Who the fuck are you?'

"But he basically said the same thing as we had," Ulrich rationalised, "and from then on we thought that maybe we shouldn't be so stubborn, and maybe see where the fuck this would bring us."

Hetfield and Ulrich's reactions to Rock pretty much reflected how the big wide world saw their union, too. "Some people thought Bob would make us sound too commercial," said Hetfield. "You know: 'Oh, Bob works with Bon Jovi, Bob works with Mötley Crüe.' But if Flemming Rasmussen [Metallica's producer to that point] worked on a Bon Jovi record, would Bon Jovi all of a sudden sound like Metallica? We chose Bob because we were really impressed with his crisp, full-sounding production on The Cult's *Sonic Temple* album and on Mötley Crüe's *Dr. Feelgood*.

"We wanted to create a different record and offer something new to our audience," Kirk Hammett agreed, once the decision was announced. "A lot of bands put out the same record three or four times, and we didn't want to fall into that rut.

"The truth is, in the past we may have been guilty of putting out the same running order – you know, start out with a fast song, then the title track, then a ballad. Other than that, though, we've really tried to create something different every time. And on *Metallica* we definitely made a conscious effort to alter and expand the band's basic elements."



Above: Lars, Bob Rock and James in a rare moment of joviality during their months of "hell" holed up together in the studio.

Below: Kirk Hammett, the man who wrote the riff that was the basis of *Enter Sandman*.

BOTTOM: BERNHARD KUHMSTEDT / RETNA

ROSS HALFIN

"I don't think we need to justify ourselves at all. We're doing our shit our way."

James Hetfield

Bob Rock liked to work in his native Vancouver. In fact he had never worked anywhere else. When you're Bob Rock, they come to you. Metallica didn't. "We really didn't want to do it in Vancouver," said Ulrich, "and he'd never made a record outside of Vancouver; everyone comes to him. For a while I didn't think it was going to work out."

They compromised on One On One studios, a fine, unflashy complex in North Hollywood, West Hollywood's ugly cousin. Settling in for the duration, Metallica and Rock tried to make it home, sprucing it up with all the usual time-killing junk: pool tables, girlie mags, basketball hoops, pinball, punchbags – "for fucking tension," said Ulrich.

He needed it, too. For Bob Rock and Metallica, One On One was a torture chamber, pure and simple. Like a golf coach rebuilding a pupil's swing, Rock set to work on Metallica. He began by having the band play the songs through together, creating a groove and a feel. The method ran directly opposite to Metallica's usual working practices. "The whole first three months of pre-production were very difficult. They were suspicious," noted Rock.

Lars suffered the most. The new groove and feel had to originate from him. As a drummer, he had built his technique around complex fills and flourishes, embellishing already long and involved tunes.

"I used to be really concerned with the timing and lengths of a song when we were writing them. But this time I didn't even want to think about it. Before, it was always about not fucking up; it was never about letting the music carry you someplace. I think we spent a lot of years trying to prove to ourselves and to everyone out there that we can play our instruments – you know, listen to this big drum fill I'm doing."

Rock and Ulrich each wanted simplicity. Not for its own sake, but to highlight the purity and power of the songs that they were refining. Ulrich, though, had trained for years to produce the exact opposite.

The band shot some home-video footage of the early months in pre-production. Some of it features Lars, fingers taped up, sweat sticking his hair to his face, losing his rag as Rock pushes him through innumerable rehearsals, countless takes. Lars had to re-learn a lot of technique as he adapted his style to the requirements of the sessions. Even when he had nailed the essential purity that he and Rock were searching for, the perfectionist producer was still insisting of upwards of 40 takes for every song.

At the same time, Rock was fighting the band's reluctance to relinquish all their past habits – and also their natural tendencies to bait him, to test his worth.

In interviews for the *Classic Album* DVD series, Lars noted: "In retrospect, the nine months we spent in this room were pure hell. We were just really reluctant. The door was open just enough for Bob to open it more and pull us through. It became about a vibe and a moment."

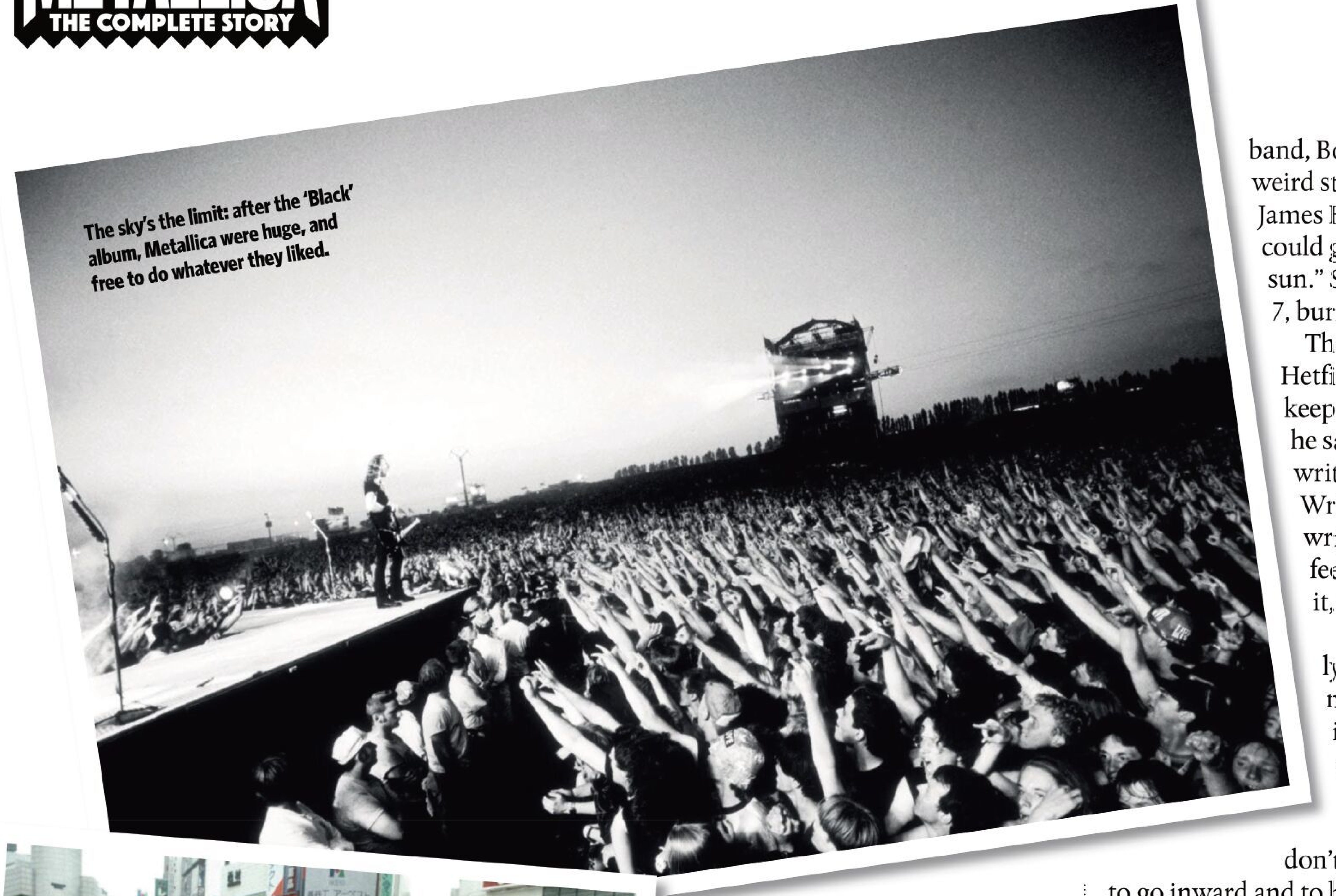
The die was cast, though. There would be no turning back. The alternative, as Lars knew, was not worth considering. Metallica must grow, or whither on the vine.

ROCK BEGAN BY MAKING SUGGESTIONS. HUNDREDS of them, some good, some mad. At first the band were inclined to blow them off, but slowly he began to make an impression on them. The first shift was really a mental leap, especially for Lars and James.

"Our reaction to his proposal was initially negative,"

The men in 'Black', Metallica Mk.III: (l to r) Jason Newsted, Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett.

ROSS HALFIN



The sky's the limit: after the 'Black' album, Metallica were huge, and free to do whatever they liked.

Hetfield, Ulrich, Hammett and Newsted merge inconspicuously with the crowd in Japan.

confessed Lars. "But when the first few songs started to develop we realised that the shit we were doing was a little more open-minded. In the past our stubbornness had been one of our shortcomings, as well as one of the reasons for our success."

Lars also took heart from the songs they had written. Rock wasn't trying to impose anything that the band felt wholly alienated by, he was concerned more with showing them the boundaries of possibility.

"All 12 songs are ours," said Lars. "They were written before we went into pre-production, but Bob was

> **"I resented Bob Rock. We didn't speak for a year after that record was made. It was ugly, nasty."**
> Lars Ulrich

great at helping us build up the whole sound. Everybody put their ideas more on the table. Last time it was: 'This is my drum sound and fuck you!' Bob's forté was that he was able to drag good performances out of us, especially the vocals.

"In the past, certain things were sacred. We had the almighty Metallica guitar riff and nothing could mess with it. Bob would say: 'You've already played that riff 92 times. I think people have it in their heads now.' So he'd put shit on top of it to give it texture. And that's been foreign to us. The main idea was to keep an open mind when ideas were presented to us. A lot of great things on the record came from not saying no."

Hetfield, too, was unequivocal: "I don't think we need to justify ourselves at all. We're doing our shit our way. The integrity is there and we still get to see all our shit from start to finish. We've got the best people working for us now, people who respect our integrity, and if outside people supply us with good ideas for Metallica then why not listen to them?"

Along with the external pressures, the contradictory forces of wanting change but rejecting its methods, and all of the quirky personality clashes and coded alliances within the band, Bob Rock was dealing with some other weird stuff, too. Lars liked to work at night. James Hetfield preferred the daytime so that he could go outside, "take a few breaks, feel some sun." So Rock ended up there at all hours. "24-7, burning the midnight oil," says James.

The 'Black' album was, above all, to be Hetfield's album. "It just got a little too easy to keep writing lyrics like the …*Justice*…' shit," he said. "It's too easy to watch the news and write a fucking tune about what you saw. Writing shit from within is a lot harder than writing the political shit, but once it's out it feels a lot easier to put your weight behind it, especially live."

"When the song is great and you add a lyric that takes it to another level, there's no better feeling. There's a big satisfaction in that. But I don't know, it's a proud kind of feel: 'Here's my baby; look at my kid.'

"I'm not the kind of guy who'll sit down and read novels or poetry and I don't write nice little poems. The only way is to go inward and to be a little bit more universal, things that touch everyone."

James did, especially with songs like *Nothing Else Matters* and *Wherever I May Roam*, which were concerned with the brotherhood of the band on the road, and *The God That Failed*, a particularly personal song about his childhood. The soundscapes that the band and Rock were creating, though lush and broad, had the new simplicity that they'd been aiming for. "The simplicity of the songs left it wide open for the vocals to take over," said James. "For me that was a first."

Ten years on, Hetfield said of Rock: "I wouldn't be where I am today without his willingness to open my mind and push me further into different singing styles and moods."

Rock in turn appreciates the personal and artistic breakthrough Hetfield made: "There's a real human quality to the album. James took a huge leap. The album stands as a very personal album."

WITH ROCK NOW GETTING THE PERFORMANCES HE wanted from Metallica, they were beginning to grasp what was possible, and they were enjoying being pushed. It was becoming apparent that the 'Black' album would be something special. There was one more major breakthrough to come: Metallica would cut a ballad. Their first. It would be a big one. With a symphony orchestra.

James was on the phone to a friend one evening, and was messing around on his acoustic guitar at the same time. He hit on a little melody picked out on the bass strings, and hung up quickly when he realised what he was doing, "I had no intentions of it being a Metallica song, it was a personal song for me," James said. "I didn't even think they'd like it. It was just me writing for me."

The tune was called *Nothing Else Matters*. Lars Ulrich: "It was a song you couldn't put borders around. So when Bob suggested the orchestra, I was open to it."

With *Nothing Else Matters*, Metallica had transgressed every boundary they'd set for themselves, and every one set by the media and public expectation. They had proven that heavy, powerful music could come through more than one medium. They'd added a new dynamic to their music and opened their appeal beyond genre. They'd cracked it. It wasn't until they'd fleshed out the 12 tunes that they realised how far from their thrash roots they had progressed.

"I'm sure we're gonna get a lot of people saying we're selling out," said Lars," but I've heard that shit from *Ride The Lightning* on. People were already going: 'Boo, sell out' back then. One side of me wants to sit there and defend it – just cos they're short songs doesn't mean they're any more accessible – and the other side says I don't give a fuck."

Hetfield, for his part, never even considered the style of the music he was making: "I never had the big picture of this

ROSS HALFIN

album that Lars did. To me it was just a bunch of good songs."

What weighed on Hetfield, and on the rest of the band and Bob Rock, was the weight of time. They had been in the studio for nine months. Their skin was turning grey. They had cabin fever.

"We've seen four other bands come through and do their albums," said Hetfield, "and some of those guys have already gone on tour."

Rock remained utterly fastidious as the album neared completion. Everything was "big and weighty". He would spend five hours patching a perfectly pitched note into a Hammett solo. He would push Ulrich through 40 takes for "the magical verses and choruses", then cut them together "into one magical track."

"Seven months in the studio with Metallica tends to change a man. And Bob's been changed," laughed James. "He's got a few more grey hairs, a few more wrinkles, he grew a tumour, and has some sore knuckles from hitting the studio walls."

Final mixes were done in New York. *Enter Sandman* took 10 days. As time ground Rock, Ulrich and Hetfield down, *Holier Than Thou* was mixed in one last, desperate session. That was ironic. Lars and James had felt that *Holier Than Thou* would probably be the first single to be released from the record when they had completed the initial demos at Lars's eight-track home studio. By contrast, *Enter Sandman* didn't even have a name at that stage.

It was an example of the record's natural evolution. Rock had first described *Sad But True* as a "*Kashmir* for the 90s", yet it would be the grandeur of *Nothing Else Matters* and *The Unforgiven* that filled that role. In dispelling the public's preconceptions of what Metallica might achieve, they had dispelled their own as well.

Ten years on, Lars Ulrich speaks with a wonderful candour about the sessions that changed his life. "I resented Bob Rock," he said. "Me and Bob Rock didn't speak for, like, the first year after that record was made. It was ugly, nasty. I'd never made a record that took that long to make. Then something strange happened a year or two after that and we became friends. Now I can't imagine making an album without him."

The rest of the band understood, too. As did Bob Rock: "You just can't argue with the songs," he said.

Lars: "There were definitely a lot of planets aligning."

James: "It was a long, slow build. It felt good to get the recognition."

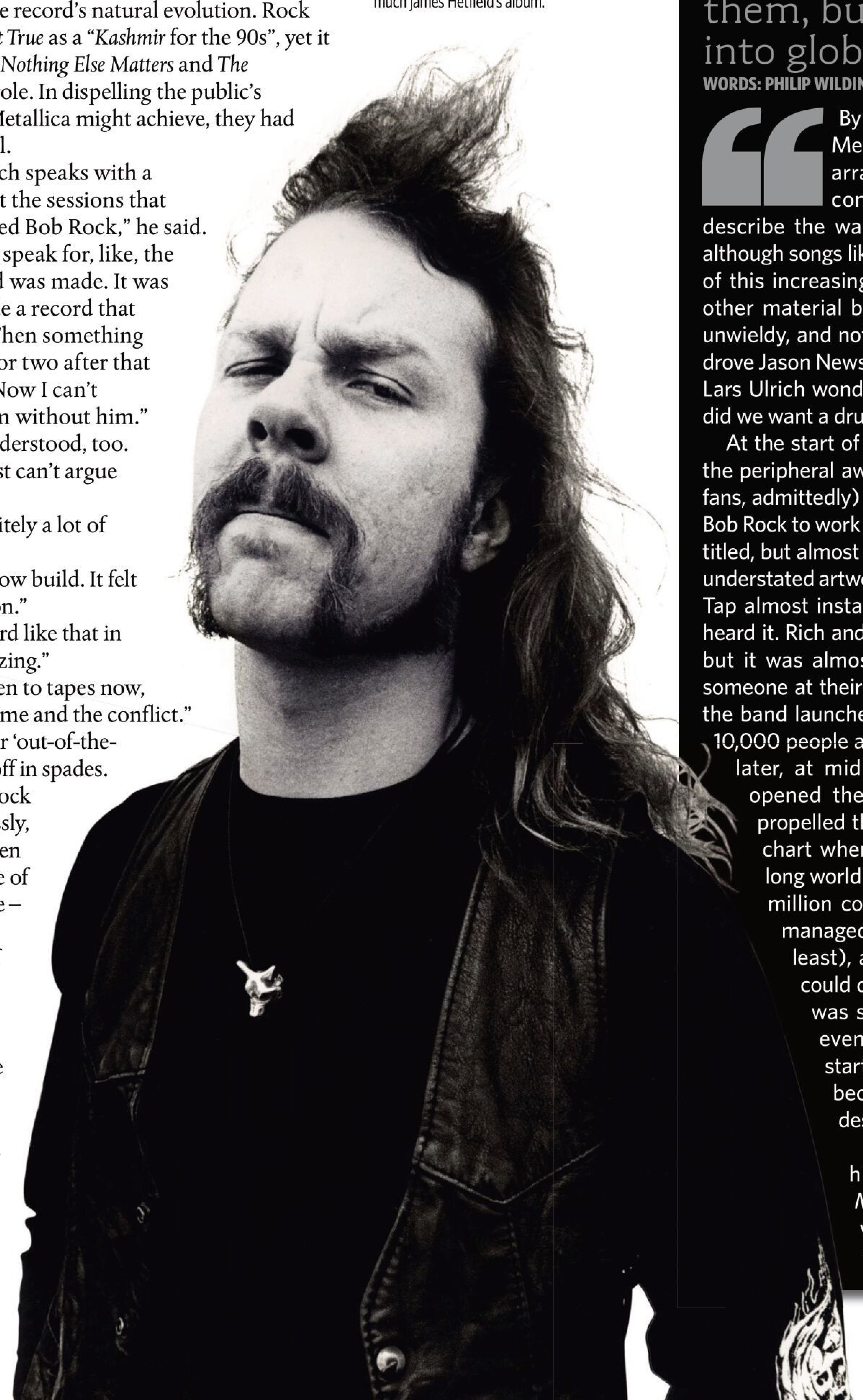
Lars: "To have one record like that in your career, it's truly amazing."

Bob Rock: "When I listen to tapes now, I hear the hours and the time and the conflict."

Metallica had made their 'out-of-the-box' decision, and it paid off in spades. They became the clichéd rock juggernaut, touring endlessly, building unstoppably. When they did call a halt a couple of years later, they were made – artistically, commercially and financially. Because of the 'Black' album, life for Metallica would never be the same again.

They could do what the hell they wanted. And so they did. They cut their hair, put on eyeliner (well, Hammett did), played gigs with a symphony orchestra, offered up a remix album… They were free.

BELOW: the 'Black' album was very much james Hetfield's album.



EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE ONE

★ METALLICA

METALLICA

Making it nearly destroyed them, but it turned them into global superstars.

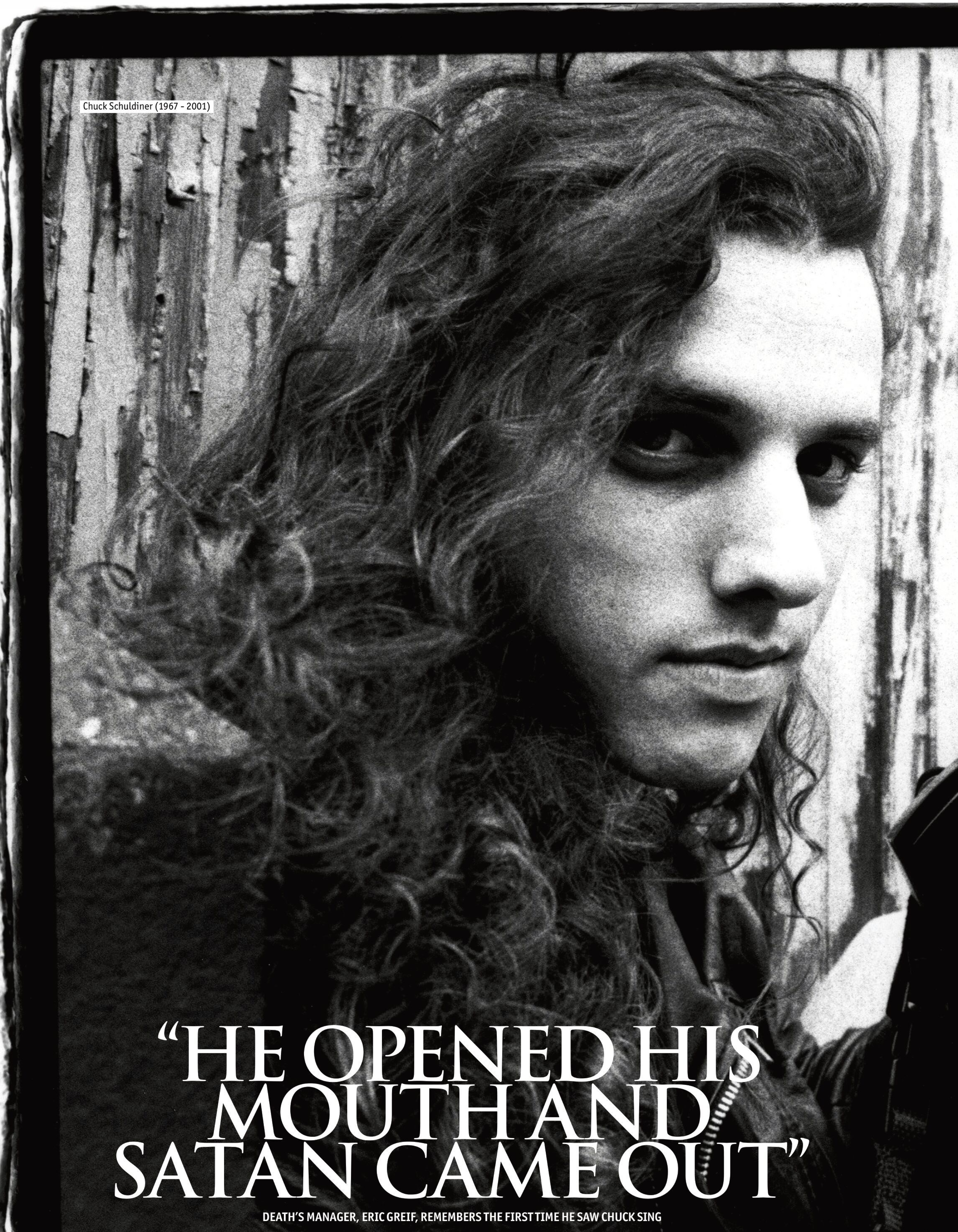
WORDS: PHILIP WILDING

"By the time of 1988's *…And Justice For All*, Metallica had taken their expansive, heavily arranged sound to an almost unnatural conclusion; 'convoluted' doesn't quite describe the way the band were now sounding. And although songs like *One* and *Harvester Of Sorrow* grew out of this increasingly sophisticated and creative regime, other material broke up on impact. It was dense and unwieldy, and not helped by a bone-dry production that drove Jason Newsted's bass all but out of the mix and had Lars Ulrich wondering out loud some years later: "Why did we want a drum sound like matchboxes being hit?"

At the start of the 90s, Metallica had all but stripped the peripheral away. They shocked fans (easily shocked fans, admittedly) by employing former Bon Jovi producer Bob Rock to work on what would be their fifth album. Self-titled, but almost inevitably dubbed the 'Black' album, it's understated artwork would draw comparisons with Spinal Tap almost instantly. That, of course, was until people heard it. Rich and brooding and dark it might have been, but it was almost always about the songs first. Even someone at their record company must have noticed as the band launched the album with a listening party for 10,000 people at Madison Square Garden. Several days later, at midnight, record stores across America opened their doors to an eager audience who propelled the album to the top of the US *Billboard* chart where it stayed for a month. A three-year long world tour later, and it had sold in excess of 15 million copies. It had the kind of shelf life that managed to sustain five singles (in the US, at least), and in *Nothing Else Matters* a song you could dance to with your girlfriend. The album was so enigmatic and dazzling that no one even felt betrayed when James Hetfield started crooning at them. On the contrary, it became a high point of a live set usually designed to bludgeon an audience.

Every great band takes the true artistic high ground once, and *Metallica* was the moment when Metallica found their footing."

MATRIN GODDACRE/STEVE DOUBLE: GETTY IMAGES



Chuck Schuldiner (1967 - 2001)

"HE OPENED HIS MOUTH AND SATAN CAME OUT"

DEATH'S MANAGER, ERIC GREIF, REMEMBERS THE FIRST TIME HE SAW CHUCK SING

THE GODFATHER

The late, great Chuck Schuldiner was the driving force behind Florida death metal pioneers Death. We look back at the man who pioneered a whole new genre before he was taken too soon.

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

Chuck Schuldiner never wanted to be The Godfather Of Death Metal. It was a genre tag he could never shake off during his short life, and one that's only grown in stature in the years since he passed away.

His reticence was understandable. Chuck's band, Death, were conceived in the 1980s as a brutal eruption of noise and viscera, but the course they sailed across their seven-album lifetime took them into uncharted waters. As their singer, guitarist and chief architect, he was one of extreme metal's iconic figures, a restless spirit in perpetual forward motion.

"Death were so far ahead of the curve that other people were playing catch-up," says Matt Heafy, Trivium vocalist and Death fan. "Chuck was so ahead of his time that it became a hindrance. If Death were still around, they'd be massive."

He hasn't been forgotten, but neither is his influence as celebrated today as it should be. With Chuck at the helm, Death produced some of the 90s' most game-changing extreme music. They married the brutal and the progressive, the blood-splattered and the cerebral. His tenacity in the face of adversity – from line-up issues to changing musical trends to the cancer that eventually killed him – was astounding. But if there's one thing he wasn't, it's a self-publicist.

"He always downplayed his part in the extreme metal puzzle," says Eric Greif, who managed Chuck through Death and beyond. "He never claimed that he created anything – he just thought his music was metal, plain and simple. He'd never admit it, but he was a visionary."

It's debatable whether Death were the first death metal band, but it was a close-run thing. San Francisco's Possessed edged them out with their 1983 demo, tellingly titled *Death Metal*. But Possessed crashed and burned within a few years, whereas Chuck persevered with the vision he'd had as a teenager growing up in Orlando, Florida.

Original Death guitarist Rick Rozz first met Chuck at a backyard party in the Sunshine State. "He was a pretty mellow, laidback guy," says Rozz today. "Me and Kam [Lee, drummer] had our band Mantas going, and we started talking to ➤

Another (slightly different) early design by Chuck

One of Chuck's original sketches for the logo

GETTY

The line-up that made 1995's *Symbolic* album: Gene Hoglan (drums), Kelly Conlon (bass), Chuck and Bobby Koelble (guitars)

Chuck about music. We were only 16, but within a couple of weeks we'd moved our stuff over to his place and dropped out of high school."

Inspired by the nascent thrash metal scene, the trio changed their band's name from Mantas to Death, reflecting their fondness for schlocky horror movies filled with blood, guts and zombies – something Chuck would draw upon for Death's first two albums. He christened himself 'Evil Chuck'. "There was no death metal scene in Florida at all," says Rick. "Obituary weren't together, Morbid Angel weren't together, Deicide weren't together. It was just us at that point."

Eric Greif met Chuck in 1987 at the inaugural Milwaukee Metal Fest. Death's groundbreaking debut album, *Scream Bloody Gore*, had been released that year. A rush of gargled noise, it drew up the template for the underground metal scene grinding into life in the Florida heat. But watching Death play live in Milwaukee, Eric saw the gleam of potential behind the volume and filth.

"I had never been exposed to anything as ferocious as his vocals," says Eric. "In 1987, Tom Araya was considered the heaviest vocalist around. Then Chuck – this handsome-looking guy – stepped onstage, opened his mouth and Satan came out. But offstage he was the opposite of that. He was polite, charismatic, kind of like a character from a Southern TV show: 'How you doing, y'all?', that kind of thing."

Death were only a few years old at that point, but they'd already had several personnel changes – something that would define them for the rest of their career. The original line-up had fallen apart in 1986, after Chuck briefly joined Canadian thrashers Slaughter, though Rick Rozz rejoined for Death's second album, *Leprosy*. The upheaval reached a nadir in 1990, when an exhausted Chuck bailed ona European tour, leaving his aggrieved bandmates to play the dates without him (it was unofficially dubbed the 'Fuck Chuck' tour, to the frontman's ire).

"Although it was a band set-up, it was clear that Chuck was the boss," says Eric, whose own relationship with Chuck had its bumps. "Me and Chuck sued each other at one point around the time of [Death's third album] *Spiritual Healing*, then we had another break a couple of years later. Our lawyers rectified everything, and we were good from then on."

Unlike many of his death metal contemporaries, Chuck was a complex person. By the time Death released 1990's *Spiritual Healing*, he was already beginning to outgrow the scene he had helped spawn. That album marked the point wherehe largely jettisoned the adolescent lyrical concerns of *Scream Bloody Gore* and its follow-up, *Leprosy*, in favour of a deeper, though no less vivid look at the human condition.

"He started out striving for what everyone was striving for at the time – horror and gore and brutality," says Eric. "He was a kid, he loved those kinds of things. But he eventually started to find the brutality in everyday life."

An even bigger leap came between *Spiritual Healing* and Death's next album, 1991's *Human*. While it was still anchored in extreme metal, it found Chuck taking the band down new avenues of complexity. For *Human*, he recruited guitarist Paul Masvidal and drummer Sean Reinert of tech-death visionaries Cynic, and Sadus's fretless bass maestro Steve DiGiorgio – a line-up that represented the cutting edge of early 90s metal.

"HE FOUND THE BRUTALITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE"

CHUCK STARTED OUT WRITING ABOUT GORE, BUT SOON BEGAN WRITING ABOUT REALITY

"Chuck grew in an extraordinary way as a musician and a lyricist from album to album," says Eric. "He was going through lots of personal turmoil – relationships with girlfriends falling apart, issues with his parents getting divorced, doubting his own abilities. In a lot of ways Death was cathartic for him. Certainly when we were suing each other, he'd call me up and say in an angry voice, 'I just wanna let you know that I wrote another song about you.'"

Death's great leaps forward continued through the 90s. The one-two of 1993's *Individual Thought Patterns* and 1995's *Symbolic* (the latter arguably their finest album) were increasingly complex and forward-looking.

"The way he approached things was so unorthodox," says Matt Heafy. "He'd treat the guitar like a flamenco player. There aren't a lot of bands where you can hear the guitarist play a riff

SCREAM BLOODY GORE

Chuck's influence spreads right across metal culture

TRIVIUM
Matt Heafy grew up in Orlando, Florida, a couple of miles away from where Death were formed. "*The Sound Of Perseverance* was my first Death album and I worked backwards," he says. "To call them 'death metal' is limiting. There was so much more to them than that."

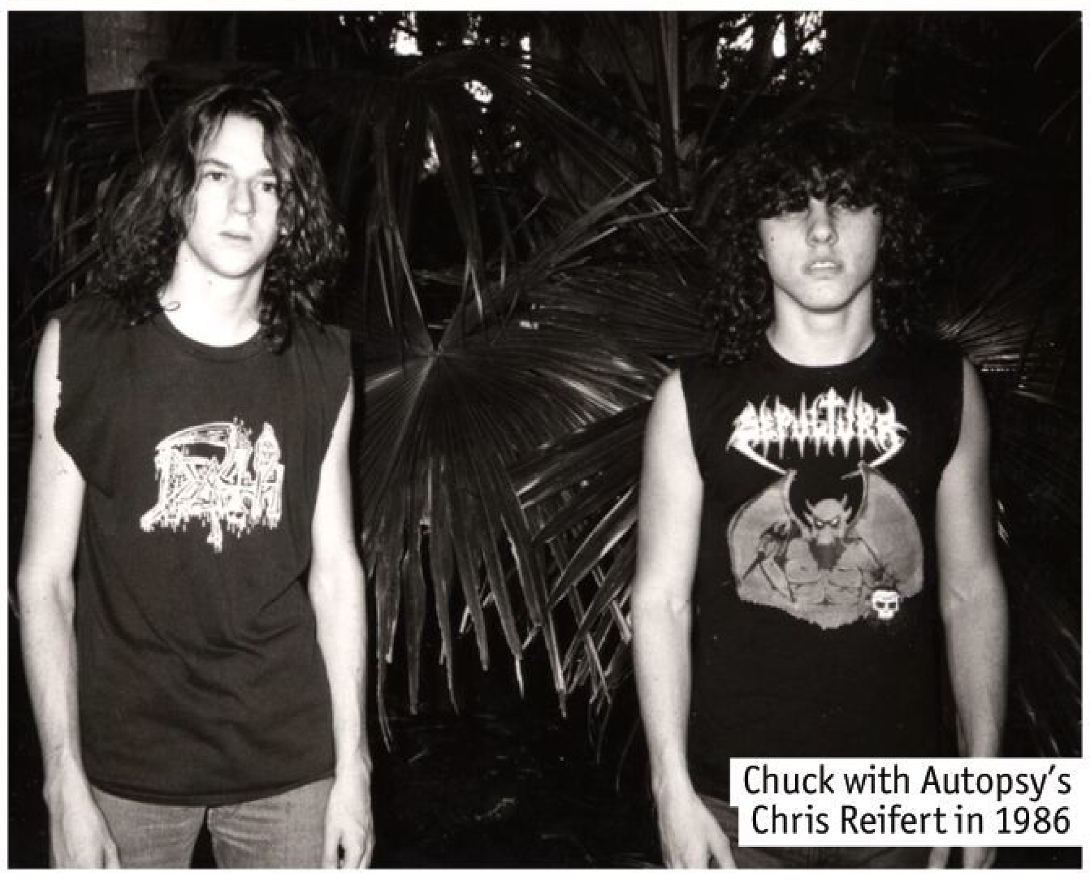
VOLBEAT
Mainman Michael Poulsen acknowledges Death as an influence on his pre-Volbeat band, Dominus. "To this day I will say that *Spiritual Healing* is the best death metal album of all time," he wrote in the liner notes of a 2012 reissue of the album.

SLIPKNOT
The Iowans' frontman Corey Taylor was just one of many musicians to pay tribute to Chuck Schuldiner when he lost his fight against cancer in 2001. "Chuck's music was really important to me growing up," said Corey. "It was really intricate and interesting."

DAVE GROHL
The Foo Fighters frontman is a fan of 80s/90s underground metal. He reportedly approached Chuck Schuldiner to appear on his all-star Probot album, alongside Lemmy, Max Cavalera, Tom G. Warrior, King Diamond and many more. Sadly, Chuck was too ill to participate.

VENOM PRISON
Extreme metal's new flag-bearers make no secret of their love of Death. "When you explore genres, you want to see where it started off and that's how I discovered them," says frontwoman Larissa Stupar. "There isn't a bad Death record."

Deaths' line-up in 1984: Rick Rozz (guitars), Kam Lee (drums) and Chuck



Chuck with Autopsy's Chris Reifert in 1986

and identify them right away. Zakk Wylde, Dimebag, James Hetfield. And you definitely can with Chuck."

Despite the acclaim that greeted successive Death albums, the 90s were a tough time. Metal was on the back foot, sucker-punched by grunge. The likes of Pantera and White Zombie were keeping the flag flying for metal, but for a band further out on the fringes it was hard.

"I think he'd become disillusioned with the music industry," says Eric. "And I think he was becoming disillusioned with Death, or at least being the singer in Death. He'd say, 'All the music is done, now I have to ruin it with my vocals.' So he decided to do something different."

1998's *The Sound Of Perseverance* was Death's final album – and Chuck's last as a vocalist. Within a year he had ditched the name and launched a new band, Control Denied. Most of the final Death line-up came with him, but there was one key difference: Chuck would focus on playing the guitar, bringing in newcomer Tim Aymar to sing.

With its intricate songs and Tim's leather-lunged vocals, the band's debut album, *The Fragile Art Of Existence*, veered closer to progressive metal titans Dream Theater than the extreme metal bands that had risen in Death's wake. Sadly, the album's title proved horribly prophetic. In 1999, the same year it was released, Chuck Schuldiner was diagnosed with brain stem cancer. "He chose to fight," says Eric. "His sister took him from doctor to doctor."

When it became apparent that the Schuldiner family couldn't afford to pay for treatment, fans raised tens of thousands of dollars to help pay his medical bills. In January 2000, Chuck underwent a life-saving operation.

"I ran into him at a bar, after his first round of surgery," says Rick Rozz. "He didn't look good; he was dragging his leg behind him. We spent a good three or four hours just sitting around talking. It was cool to see the guy."

For a while, it looked like the treatment had been a success. "He was in remission and everyone thought he was going to survive," says Eric. "But then he took a turn for the worse."

In May 2001, Chuck's family announced that the disease had returned. The metal community rallied round him once again. Heavyweight acts such as Korn, Marilyn Manson and the Red Hot Chili Peppers donated memorabilia for an auction to help fund his medical bills. Trivium, who had formed just a couple of years earlier, played a fundraising show at the Fairbanks Inn in Orlando. "It was just local bands, but it was an honour to be able to do it," says Matt Heafy, who grew up just a few miles from where Chuck co-founded Death all those years ago.

"HE TREATED THE GUITAR LIKE A FLAMENCO PLAYER"

TRIVIUM'S MATT HEAFY WAS IN AWE OF CHUCK'S UNORTHODOX TECHNIQUE

Sadly, it was to no avail. On December 13, 2001, Chuck died, aged 34. "He fought all the way," says Eric, who helped organise a memorial service that was attended by Corey Taylor, HIM's Ville Valo, Dave Grohl and more. Tellingly, despite the occasionally fractious history they had had with their former bandmate, every former member of Death also turned up.

"Even though he seemed to have falling-outs with the musicians in his bands, people at his labels, everyone respected him," says Eric. "Even after all this time, people don't bring up horror stories about working with him."

Chuck had started work on a second Control Denied album before his death. Despite fans' clamour for it to be released, Eric – who was appointed by the Schuldiner family to look after Chuck's musical legacy – insists that the record was barely even begun when he died.

"It never got beyond the simplest demos," remembers Eric. "He was physically unable to play even the simplest riffs. Finishing it posthumously is nearly impossible. You can't just snap your fingers and expect people to know what Chuck would have wanted."

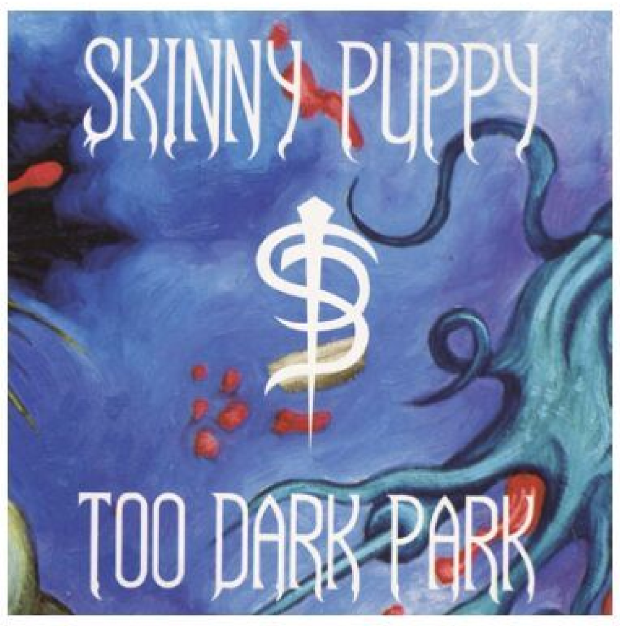
Even without it, Chuck left a stellar legacy. The eight albums he released during his lifetime were a personal evolution that mirrored metal's own evolution. Today, his legacy can be heard in everyone from Volbeat to next-gen metal torch-bearers Venom Prison. Almost 20 years after his death, the reluctant Godfather Of Death Metal remains as important and influential as ever.

"I meet kids who don't know their roots, their history," says Matt Heafy. "They don't know it, but when they're listening to their favourite band, they're hearing Death in there." ✠

Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor: industrial metal kingpin.

THE 10 ESSENTIAL INDUSTRIAL METAL ALBUMS

From Ministry and Skinny Puppy to Nine Inch Nails and Rammstein, these are the pipe-banging classics that built a genre.

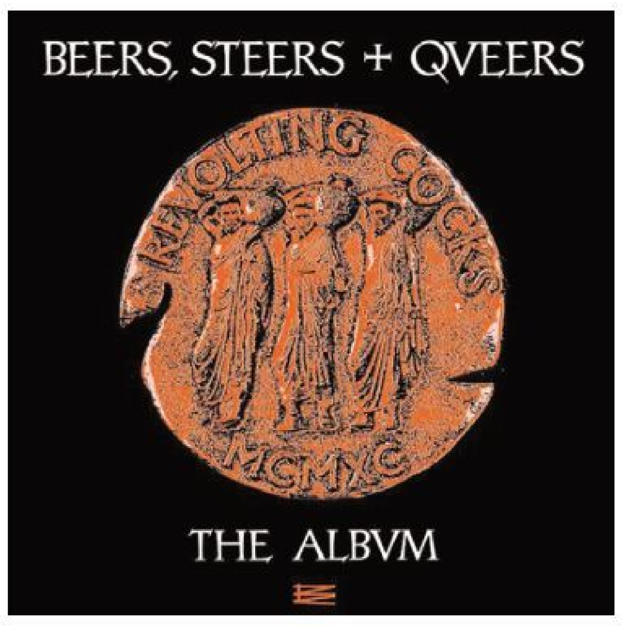


SKINNY PUPPY

Too Dark Park (Nettwerk, 1990)

Along with Ministry, Skinny Puppy defined industrial music throughout the 80s. Although this is a great album, it marked the end of Skinny Puppy as a significant force for the best part of 10 years as they became embroiled in drug problems, legal disputes and a titanic struggle to make a concept album.

Too Dark Park was almost like their response to the techno scene: they plundered the dance-floor beats, but layered so many samples and raw screaming noise over the top that it became a sort of anti-house sound, the polar opposite of the ecstasy-fuelled dance music then ubiquitous.



REVOLTING COCKS

Beers, Steers & Queers (Wax Trax, 1990)

Yee-haw! Ministry side project Revco featured a veritable Who's Who from the industrial scene: Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor, Richard 23 from Front 242, Nivek Ogre of Skinny Puppy and Chris Connelly of Fini Tribe all toured or recorded with the band at one time.

Their classic depraved disco album features the title track, a pulverising redneck stomp (sparked off by a sample from the movie *Deliverance*), as well as a cover of the Olivia Newton John hit *Physical* that almost got them sued. The result successfully burst the bubble of po-faced industrial music.

FRONT 242

Tyranny For You (Epic, 1991)

Sounding like a gang of paramilitaries who had salvaged Kraftwerk's discarded gear, Belgium's Front 242 straddled the old industrial scene and the emergent Euro techno scene. Dubbed 'nu beat' when they emerged in the early 80s, they peaked with their 1988 album *Front By Front* and this collection of paranoia-drenched cyber metal menace.

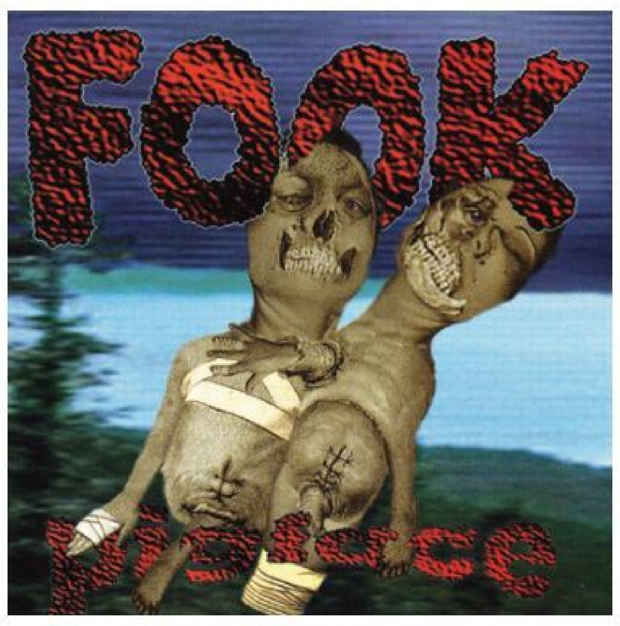
Released at the height of the first Gulf War, its barrage of samples and frazzled electro-beats was the perfect accompaniment to getting drunk and watching smart bombs zero-in on Iraqi schools and hospitals live on TV.

MINISTRY

Psalm 69 (Sire, 1992)

Before this was released, there was some talk that Ministry had already peaked with their 1989 release *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste*. How wrong they were.

Psalm 69 was actually a title of convenience, as it's actually called something unpronounceable and occultish in Greek or just plain Ministry. The fact that it spawned a Top 40 hit and an MTV favourite in the demented *Jesus Built My Hotrod* (with Butthole Surfers man Gibby Haynes on vocals) may have been an albatross around their neck in later times, but in 1992, in the wake of …*Teen Spirit* and all, it seemed like they were taking over the world.



PIGFACE

Fook (Invisible, 1993)

The second album from ex-Killing Joke drummer Martin Atkins' collective Pigface features a cast of thousands including Revolting Cocks' Chris Connelly, Killing Joke's Paul Raven, Skinny Puppy's Nivek Ogre and Lesley Rankine of UK indie-punks Silverfish who bellows out the abrasive feminist anthem *Hips, Tits, Lips, Power!*

It's a rare and neglected album, crammed with gems like the explosive *I Can Do No Wrong* and the hellish – in a good way – *Insemination*. The remix album *washingmachinemouth* was even more bizarre and distorted, and one of the few such releases worth a shit.

LEAD: EBET ROBERTS/GETTY

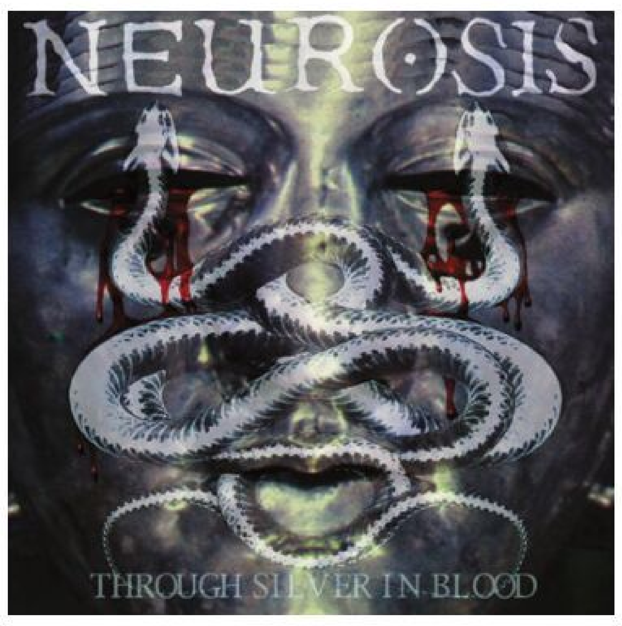
KMFDM

Nihil (Wax Trax, 1995)

If you had to pick one album that represented a 'typical' industrial album, it would probably be this.

KMFDM (which stands for Kein Mehrheit Für Die Mitleid, or 'no pity for the majority') were cult mainstays who suddenly found themselves singled out in the wake of the Columbine shootings when they were found to have been one of the Trenchcoat Mafia's favourite bands.

Like an Depeche Mode they had a strong pop sensibility under their Teutonic militaristism. This includes their best song, *Juke Joint Jezebel*, their collaboration with Pig frontman and kindred spirit Raymond Watts.



NEUROSIS

Through Silver In Blood (Music For Nations, 1996)

Continuing in the 'arty' tradition of early industrial bands like Throbbing Gristle, San Francisco's Neurosis reached something of a creative apogee with this terrifying and cathartic masterpiece of an album.

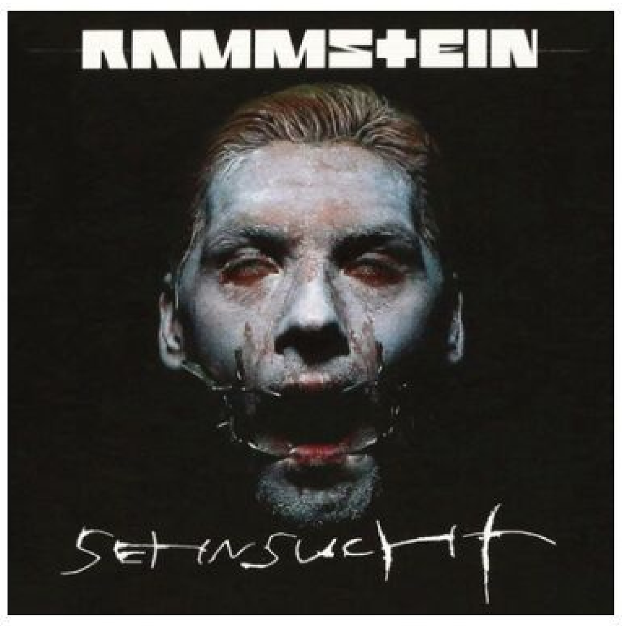
Neurosis have made some very approachable and listenable albums, but this isn't one of them. *Through Silver In Blood* is less about creating songs, and more about surrounding the listener with an atmosphere of malevolence and impending apocalypse. Listening to this record is like being at the calm centre of a raging emotional typhoon of destruction.

NINE INCH NAILS

The Downward Spiral (Interscope, 1994)

A decade-defining album – unarguably one of the best of the 90s. And although it's undeniably 'industrial' in spirit, it was clear that mainman Trent Reznor had no interest in being hemmed in by any narrow genre definitions.

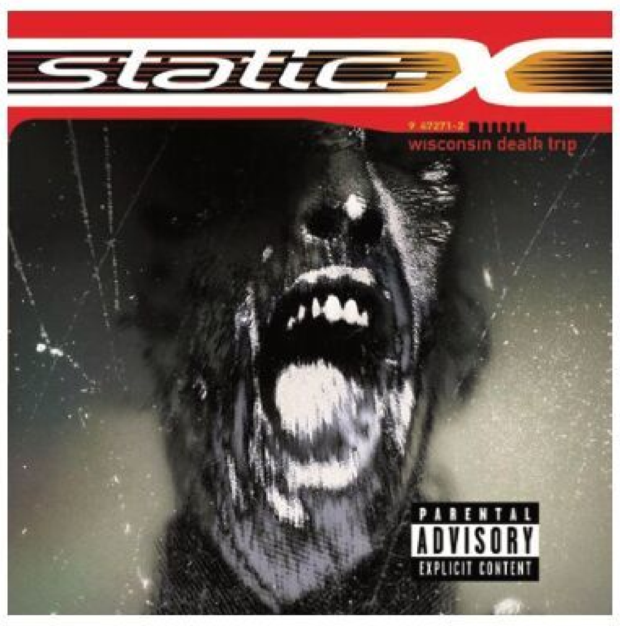
The title track and *Heresy* were recognisably the work of the man who had made *Pretty Hate Machine* – pure, raging cyberpunk – but much of it was unfamiliar territory. Pop, quasi-classical pieces, ambient noise and screaming, decaying heavy metal were rammed together, with the end result an unstoppable chain reaction and a potent explosion of music.



RAMMSTEIN

Sehnsucht (Slash, 1998)

When they first emerged, there was a certain amount of scepticism about Rammstein; some saw them as closet Nazi sympathisers flogging the dead horse of industrial music. History has been more favourable, however, and this album is now seen as the first utterances of a new force in industrial music rather than yet another retread of sub-NIN electro-beat. On this album they hadn't taken the path of symphonic grandiosity that they would take on later albums like *Mutter*; *Sehnsucht* keeps it stripped down and brutally bare, yet with enough of a hint of the epic in their songs to raise this above the common herd.



STATIC-X

Wisconsin Death Trip (Warner Bros, 1999)

It's ironic that, as Static-X were snapped up by Warners, Ministry, the band that they were unashamedly based upon, were quietly dropped.

Sneered at by older 'buffs', Static-X re-tooled industrial music for the MTV generation. The potential that they displayed on this album is immense, though they never really built on it the way that they should have. Fake divides between techno, disco, pop, metal and industrial never bothered them – they never claimed to be making something 'challenging'. How could man with a haircut like Wayne Static be about anything other than pure entertainment?

Emperor "started as a side-project to go back to basics" in 1991

FORGED IN FIRE

In 1991 Norway became a crucible of creativity, sparking the black metal scene and causing a chain reaction of controversy

WORDS: CHRIS CHANTLER

In 1991, extreme metal was in a violent state of flux. Death metal had polished itself up and emerged from the tape-trading underground as a serious commercial force. Sweden was a prolific stronghold; scene leaders such as Entombed, Dismember, Grave and Unleashed were selling worldwide, and the inexhaustible torrent of new bands and demos continued apace.

As the year began, Norway's modest scene was languishing in the shadow of their more popular, professional Scandinavian neighbours, but by December a Norwegian revolution had occurred, sharply dividing the underground and spawning a set of distinctive aesthetics, harrowing atmospheres and merciless philosophies, pushing metal to dangerous, abstract new extremes. This approach would escalate to arson, murder and lasting infamy for the black metal scene, but in 1991 that was all in the future.

"We didn't have any ambitions, we didn't try to fit in or make products that would be available in a mainstream form," says Ihsahn, frontman with black metal figureheads Emperor, who formed in 1991. "That's the only state of mind where we could create something unique enough to have that impact."

The roots of Norwegian black metal lay in the mid-80s. Since 1984, Mayhem had staggered along that indistinct 1980s line between thrash, punk, death and black metal, but by 1991 guitarist Euronymous was hardening a combative elitist stance that quickly came to dominate the Norwegian underground.

"Ninety-five per cent of the bands today are worthless shit," he announced in issue 8 of *Slayer* zine. "There are just a few who manage to capture the brutality and evil which the ancient bands like Sodom, Destruction, Bathory, Possessed, Venom, Hellhammer/Celtic Frost and so on had. It's very important that the music is filled with dark moods and the music smells of destruction." He spoke of his dream of a scene where bands in spikes and chainmail played music that was "gruesome and evil, that normal people fear."

One person who read the interview was a teenager from the sleepy town of Notodden in southern Norway named Hårvard Ellefsen, who started 1991 fronting a Carcass-inspired junior-DM band by the name of Rupturence.

"The main reason the whole Norwegian black metal scene got going was probably thanks to that Mayhem interview," he says today. "It was [singer] Dead and Euronymous talking about how the scene was dead and boring. It influenced us a lot; we were like, 'Fuck man, these guys are right!'" By the end of the year Harvard would have adopted the name Mortiis and joined Emperor as bassist and lyricist.

Mayhem's infamy only grew when the intensely committed Dead killed himself in April 1991. It precipitated such a call-to-arms response from Norway's underground that, within months, Euronymous's dream had come true.

Darkthrone were the first to react. The trio had begun 1991 by releasing their highly creditable, if distinctly Swedish-sounding, *Soulside Journey* debut, but within months they were publicly repudiating death metal, amplifying those mid-80s influences cited by Euronymous and recording the genre-defining classic *A Blaze In The Northern Sky* in August. Tellingly, it was "eternally dedicated" to Euronymous, "the king of death/black metal underground", who

Euronymous, who aired his frustrations in an interview and kickstarted a whole movement

"IT WAS LIKE A CULT, BOUND TO END IN INSANITY"

WHEN MORTIIS LEFT EMPEROR, HE KNEW THEY WERE HEADING FOR TROUBLE

cemented this reputation by opening Oslo record shop Helvete in summer '91. Mortiis remembers Helvete's fetid breeding ground in its heyday: "'Everybody there in '91 was either in a band or about to join one," he recalls.

Helvete became a crucial meeting place for Norway's incipient 'Black Metal Inner Circle', which now expanded at an astonishing rate. Bergen gorehounds Old Funeral released the brutal *Devoured Carcass* EP in June; by December their guitarist Kristian Vikernes had become Count Grishnackh, formed Burzum and recorded two demos. The dudes from Amputation became Immortal. Eczema changed their name to Satyricon, and members of Mortem set up Arcturus. Phobia released a thoroughly death metal demo in July; by December, Phobia's 13-year-old guitarist Ivar Bjørnson and 17-year-old bassist/vocalist Grutle Kjellson had put together the Viking-themed Enslaved, and released a demo announcing 'The Death Metal Scene Is Dead. Greet The Age Of Black Metal!'

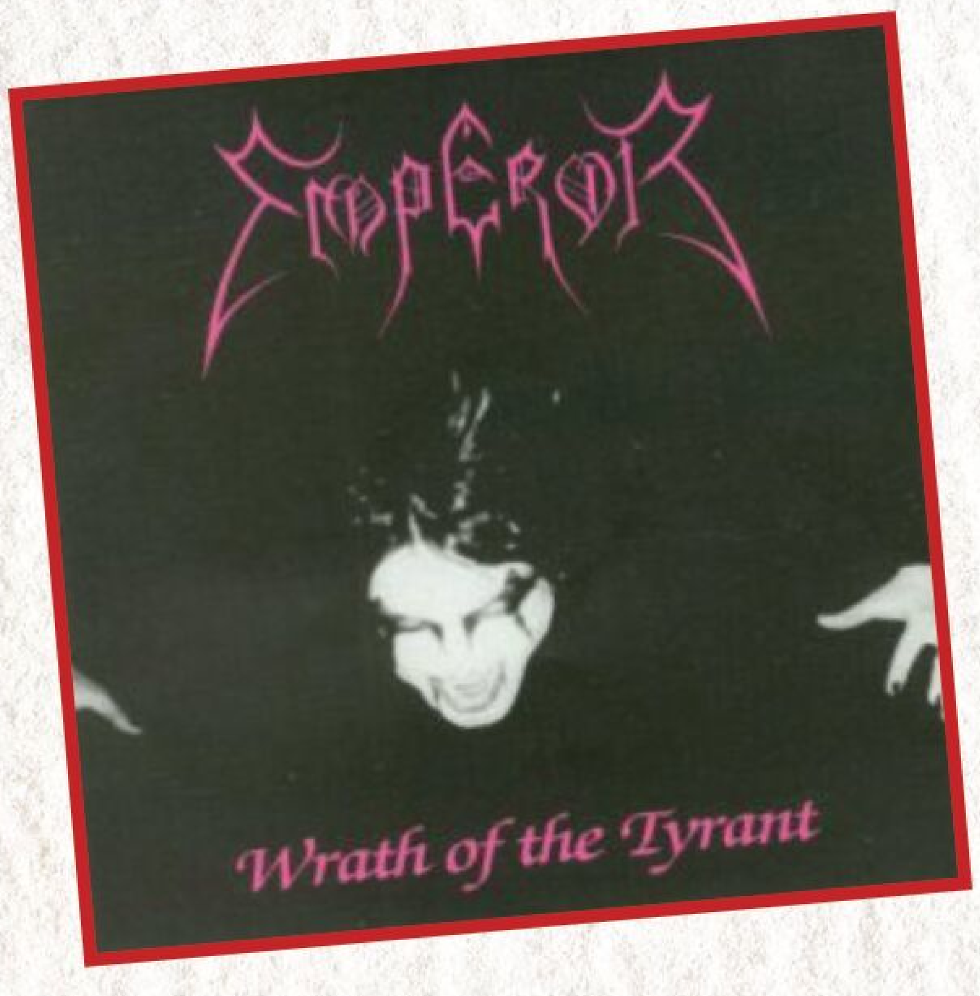
Mayhem's Euronymous, Necrobutcher and Dead

"WE WANTED TO CREATE MUSIC THAT WAS LARGER THAN LIFE"

IHSAHN EXPLAINS HOW HE WANTED TO SOUNDTRACK THE "MOST EPIC, VIOLENT, DARK MOVIE EVER"

Aside from Mayhem and Darkthrone, the earliest Norwegian black metal in '91 retained the over-eager cack-handedness of tentative juvenilia, but two musicians straightaway loomed head-and-shoulders over contemporary din-makers. Vegard 'Ihsahn' Tveitan and Tomas 'Samoth' Haugen had been making music together since 1989; entering 1991 in the appropriately named DM band Embryonic, the pair were already impressing their peers. "They were way ahead, we thought at the time," remembers Mortiis.

Swiftly this dynamic duo started another new band, Thou Shalt Suffer, recording two demos and an EP within six months. Although retaining cryptic deathly traces, early atmospheres of frostbitten grimnity and keyboard-laced majesty were glimpsed in embryo, yet despite the promise so evident in these recordings, Ygg and Samot (as they then styled themselves) had one more ace up their sleeve in this turbulent year: Emperor.



"Emperor really started as a side-project to go back to basics, more primitive, towards the old school," affirms Ihsahn of the now-legendary band's earliest impulses. "The borders were really clear-cut, although Thou Shalt Suffer still had some of that evil, Satanic vibe about it. By the time we recorded the first Emperor EP, we'd decided to bring in the keyboards and that more epic atmosphere, so all the stuff we'd been doing then culminated in Emperor."

"They wanted to move more in the black metal direction," says Mortiis, reminiscing about the day he was asked to join Emperor. "I don't think they called it that at the time, they just wanted to do something darker and more occult."

Although this would become a popular pastime in Norway in '91, Mortiis knew he was getting involved with something very special. "The cool thing about Emperor in the very early days was that they immediately seemed quite original," he says. "Maybe that's because Ihsahn doesn't come out of that underground death metal scene, he came out of trying to be a fuckin' great musician. He was a really musical guy, so that added to this whole thing being a bit different."

"We wanted to create music that sounded fucking larger than life," explains Ihsahn. "That's why we put all those keyboards in, and all that reverb – we wanted it to sound like a soundtrack to the most epic, violent, dark movie ever! It was almost delusions of grandeur in an artistic sense. With our music we wanted to paint endless dark forests with a constant full moon, and to live that fantasy. There was such a strong dedication to that, not even lifestyle, just this fantasy world that we'd created!"

Mayhem's Dead killed himself in 1991

"A MAYHEM INTERVIEW STARTED EVERYTHING"

MORTIIS EXPLAINS HOW THE NORWEGIAN BLACK METAL SCENE EXPLODED

Within two years, that fantasy world had turned sour. Euronymous was murdered by Vikernes, and after a notorious spate of church burning, assault and murder, by the mid-90s Ihsahn was the only member of Emperor not in prison. Mortiis, who had left Emperor in 1992 and quickly retreated into his dungeon to begin a 25-year solo career, remembers how quickly the scene imploded.

"It didn't last long. We'd take our lyrics and try to live them as much as possible, which didn't end well. Once you got into that whole downward spiral of being crazy and extreme, it was bound to dissolve. It was like a cult; one person would spur everyone on and it became this loud, screeching feedback effect where it was bound to end in insanity. That scene got really scattered and messed-up in 1993, but by that point it was spreading across the world, lots of bands were popping up, it was too late to stop. And it's still here, so fuck, man, we did something right. Kinda." ✠

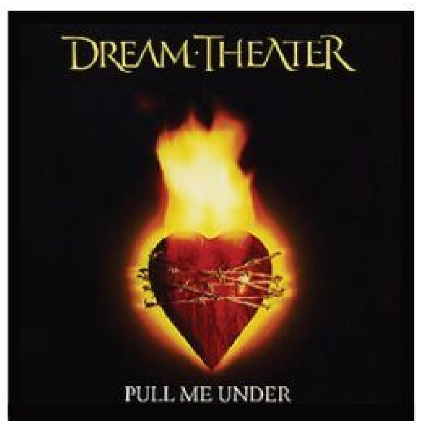
1991 saw the birth of Immortal

Dream Theater

Pull Me Under

In the early 90s, prog metal was a terminally unhip genre with little chance of radio or MTV airplay. Then a suprise, Shakespeare-inspired hit changed everything.

Words: **Malcolm Dome**



BIG WILLY STYLE
While it is generally agreed that William Shakespeare is the greatest writer in the history of the English language, his impact on modern rock has been oddly limited. While Dream Theater took inspiration from his play *Hamlet* for *Pull Me Under*, other artists have been more brazen in wearing the Bard's influence on their sleeve. Lou Reed and Dire Straits have both written songs inspired by *Romeo And Juliet* (Reed titled his *Romeo Had Juliette*; Mark Knopfler just pinched the name wholesale); Rush borrowed the phrase *'All the world's a stage and we are merely players'* for 1981's *Limelight* (and attendant live album *All The World's A Stage*). Top marks go to Titus Andronicus, who named themselves after Shakespeare's bloodiest play.

You can blame William Shakespeare for Dream Theater's success. He may have died four centuries ago, but the Bard was the inspiration for the song that not only saved the budding prog-metal band's career, but also gave them an unexpected hit during the grunge era in the shape of *Pull Me Under*.

"We got airplay with that song, and that was remarkable," says guitarist John Petrucci. "At the time, grunge was starting to take over. So unless you were Nirvana, Pearl Jam or the like, radio stations weren't interested. But *Pull Me Under* was the exception."

As the 1990s dawned, Dream Theater were on the skids. The Boston band's highly rated debut album, 1989's *When Dream And Day Unite*, had seen them held up by the press as the missing link between Rush and Metallica. But the acclaim wasn't matched by record sales, and the band were dropped by their label, Mechanic/MCA. To make life even more difficult, they had fired singer Charlie Dominici due to what they saw as limitations with his voice. With no label and no singer, and out-of-step with the changing musical times, Dream Theater considered splitting up.

They didn't. But they did enter a two-year wilderness period in which they knuckled down to ensure they had some kind of future. Still without a vocalist, they began to stockpile songs with a view to recording them when they did eventually find a suitable frontman. It was during this time that original keyboardist Kevin Moore wrote *Pull Me Under*. "To us it was just another decent track we might be able to use in the future," Petrucci remembers.

For inspiration, Moore turned to Shakespeare – specifically *Hamlet*. The song was written from the perspective of the titular Danish prince. One line from the play even made it into the lyrics: *'Oh, that this too, too much solid flesh would melt.'*

The band recorded a demo of the song with Moore on vocals. "That's the way things worked out for us – whoever wrote the lyrics would handle the singing on the demo," says Petrucci. "We tended to demo everything."

The tape caught the ear of Derek Shulman at Atco Records. Shulman had a stellar track record as an A&R man – he had been responsible for the signings of 80s hard-rock success stories Bon Jovi and Cinderella, among others. Shulman had also been the vocalist with baroque British prog band Gentle Giant, and Dream Theater's complex, musicianly approach chimed with him straight away.

"I heard the basic demo of *Pull Me Under*," Shulman recalls. "It was one of four songs which persuaded me they were worth having on the label."

By the time the band began to record their second album, *Images And Words*, they had added Canadian singer James LaBrie, who had until recently been in glam-metal band Winter Rose. *Pull Me Under* might have been written before he joined, but LaBrie stamped his own personality on it. "I had this idea for giving my voice a raspy feel," LaBrie says today. So I went into the vocal booth and got Doug [Oberkircher, the album's engineer] to try some settings that would make me sound a little gruff."

Apart from that, the finished track was kept exactly as it was when it was first written – with one exception: "The original version has a neo-classical guitar part in the middle," explains Petrucci. "But when we began to record, we realised that we had to lose this part, as it didn't work. We took it out of *Pull Me Under*, and it became the instrumental *Erotomania* on our next album, *Awake*."

The guitarist knew that Dream Theater had come up with something special with *Pull Me Under*. Despite being eight minutes long, it was both strongly melodic and instantly memorable. "I kept playing it to friends," he says. "'You've gotta hear what we've done!' But it never occurred to me that it would become so popular."

Derek Shulman agreed. He spotted the song's potential to get the band airplay, and put out an edited, five-minute version to DJs across the US in August 1992. To the band's surprise, if not Shulman's, word of the single began to spread.

"At first it was one DJ on a radio station who picked up on it and decided off his own bat to play it over and over again," Petrucci says, laughing. "And then it spread to other stations."

The wildfire success of the single caught the band on the hop. They made a hurried decision to shoot a video. "We were on the road at the time," says Petrucci, "and suddenly the label were really pushing us to get a video done. The only way was to have footage shot of us on stage, and have that edited down. It was all such a rushed job. But this did get on to MTV, which was crucial exposure."

"It proved there was hope for a style of music that was totally out of favour."

In the US *Pull Me Under* reached No.10 in *Billboard*'s Hot Mainstream Rock Chart – an impressive achievement, given the musical climate and the complexity of Dream Theater's music. After a shaky start, their career was back on track.

"We were suddenly selling out venues," recalls LaBrie. "Before the song got on the radio, we were doing okay. But now, people wanted to see us. We were still on the club circuit, but at least the band could move forward."

But the success of the single had wider implications. Dream Theater opened the door for prog metal. Suddenly an almost terminally unfashionable genre was in the charts and on the airwaves.

"I wouldn't say loads of bands started to copy us," LaBrie offers, "but what it did was prove to them there was hope for a style of music that was totally out of favour in the early 90s. For Dream Theater it was the launching point for everything we've since achieved."

GETTY

Dream Theater: putting prog back in the charts

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
August 29, 1992
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
US: No.10 UK: did not chart
PERSONNEL
James LaBrie
Vocals
John Petrucci
Guitar
Kevin Moore
Keyboards
John Myung
Bass
Mike Portnoy
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Kevin Moore (lyrics) and Dream Theater (music)
PRODUCER
David Prater
LABEL
Atco

Pantera (l-r): Rex Brown, Phil Anselmo, Vinnie Paul, Dimebag Darrell.

GETTY

Track listing

'MOUTH FOR WAR'
'A NEW LEVEL'
'WALK'
'FUCKING HOSTILE'
'THIS LOVE'
'RISE'
'NO GOOD (ATTACK THE RADICAL)'
'LIVE IN A HOLE'
'REGULAR PEOPLE (CONCEIT)'
'BY DEMONS BE DRIVEN'
'HOLLOW'

PHIL ANSELMO: VOCALS
DIMEBAG DARRELL: GUITAR
REX BROWN: BASS
VINNIE PAUL: DRUMS
PRODUCED BY: TERRY DATE AND PANTERA

The Story Behind…

Vulgar Display Of Power

PANTERA

IT WAS 1992. Machine Head and Stone Sour formed. Metallica and Guns N' Roses were co-headlining US stadiums when James Hetfield suffered third-degree burns in a pyro accident and Axl Rose incited a riot in Montreal. Rage Against The Machine released their self-titled debut album. Nirvana were selling around 300,000 copies a week of *Nevermind*. And Pantera delivered up the ultra-heavy *Vulgar Display Of Power*.

WORDS: MALCOLM DOME. INTERVIEWS: JON WIEDERHORN.

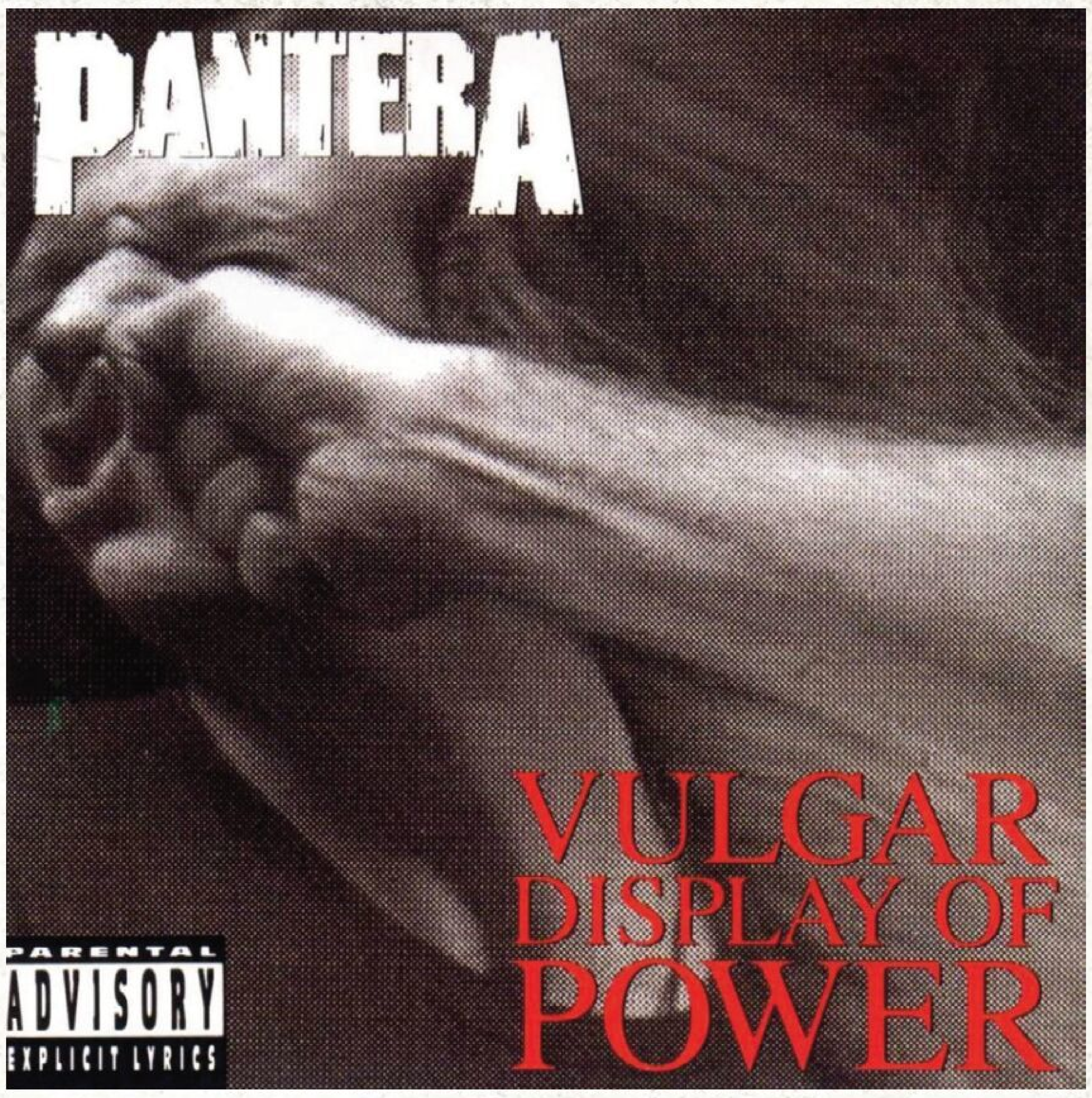
From Dallas, Texas, Pantera had started as a glam crew, beginning in 1981 by covering Kiss and Van Halen songs. Their first three albums – 1983's *Metal Magic*, *Projects In The Jungle* a year later and, finally, *I Am The Night* (1985) – were very much rooted in the big hair genre. But there was to be a radical shift.

In 1987, vocalist Phil Anselmo joined founder-members (and brothers) Diamond Darrell (guitar) and Vinnie Paul (drums), plus Rex Rocker (bass). A year later, the *Power Metal* album shoved the band more towards the thrash scene. And this was taken to another level when, after signing their first major label deal with Atco, Pantera reinvented themselves with 1990's breakthrough album *Cowboys From Hell*. By this time, Rex Rocker had become Rex Brown, and Diamond Darrell was now Dimebag Darrell. The record, moreover, established Pantera's reputation as a new force on the metal scene.

"On *Cowboys From Hell* we got the opportunity to tour with some really kick-ass bands, including Judas Priest, Exodus, Sepultura, Suicidal Tendencies and Prong," recalls Vinnie. "And that really drove us to another level. We saw our music kicking ass, and I think that catapulted us into what we did with *Vulgar Display Of Power*."

What Pantera now had to do with the follow-up to *Cowboys*... was build on the momentum that had driven that album to capturing the imagination of the metal hordes. As producer Terry Date says, "Pantera wanted to make the heaviest record of all time."

The band chose to record at Pantego Sound Studios, which was owned by



"This dude was paid $10 a punch, and it took 30 real punches to his face to get the perfect [cover] image"

PHIL ANSELMO

Jerry Abbott – Vinnie Paul and Dimebag's country musician/producer father.

"When we started working on *Vulgar*..., Phil and I found these really cheap loft apartments that were right across from the studio," Rex remembers. "We made this little hole in the fence, so we could walk right from our apartments to the studio. Rita (Haney, Darrell's girlfriend) had one of these loft apartments, too, and Darrell and Vinnie were still at their mom's house, but they had vehicles so they could get around. Me and Phil were still broke, so I bought myself a bike. I used to ride up to this place that was like a 7-Eleven, and we knew a guy that was working up there, and he'd leave us beer and sandwiches so we had something to eat when we were done working."

The band were so eager to get this right that work even started without their producer.

"We had the songs *A New Level*, *Regular People (Conceit)* and *No Good (Attack The Radical)* demoed before Terry came in," Vinnie says now. "We wanted to get a headstart. We had even begun work on getting the tones, and they were pretty good, but when Terry showed up, we really finetuned it.

"To us, heavy metal had to sound like a machine. So we worked really hard to just be this abrasive saw. The guitar had to have a buzzsaw sound to it, the drums had to have an edge to them, and I just remember Dime and Terry Date spending many, many hours in there just being very meticulous about getting the guitars 'ass-tight', as they put it. Once we got the tones dialled in, the three of us wrote the music during the day, and then Phil would come over from his apartment and hear something. He'd be like, 'Wow, dude, that is so badass!' And then we would finally take a break and go out to a nightclub, and then come back to hear what Phil had done on top of it. We worked together as a team like that, and we really had that all-for-one, one-for-all mentality."

But this was Pantera, and while they worked with a focus and energy, they also partied with equal commitment.

"We used to play this game called Chicken Brake," says Vinnie, "where you suddenly grab the fuckin' emergency brake and the whole car would come to a screeching halt. One night we took Terry's rental car and we were hauling ass down the highway in the pouring rain, and all of a sudden Rex thinks it would be funny to reach over and hit the

chicken brake. I was doing, like, 60 miles per hour, and when he hit it the car went into a 360° spin, and spun and spun and spun, and then it just came to a stop in the middle of the highway. We both just looked at each other pale white and went, 'OK, that didn't happen…', and kept going.

"Later that night, we went out for drinks, and we were really ripped when we got back. We went through this neighbourhood and ran over every fuckin' mailbox. I don't know how we didn't go to jail, or blow the radiator out! But we pulled up in front of the studio. And Terry comes running out and sees the headlights on his car all busted out, the fucking front end was all bashed in. There was steam coming off the motor. And he never yelled at us like he did that night. He's going, 'Man, I'm gonna have to pay for this and the fuckin' label's gonna fire me!' And we were like, 'Dude, just chill. We'll take care of it. We'll make enough money on this record to pay for it.'"

GETTY

"The aggression, the intensity, the stripped raw and bleeding emotion of those songs connected with the audience in a dangerous way"

PHIL ANSELMO

Two months into recording the album, the band got an offer they couldn't turn down – the opportunity to open for AC/DC and Metallica in Russia. They grabbed the chance to do this, and it proved to be a triumph.

"We went on at two in the afternoon, and it was definitely the most unbelievable, huge stage I had ever been on," exclaims Phil Anselmo. "Staring out into the crowd was blinding. It wasn't a crowd; it was a fucking ocean. But there were no real nerves there and once we got onstage, man, we just fucking clicked. We were a fucking machine. We were ready for war and we were bringing it to you.

"We flew home, and went back in the studio with a bit more swagger in our step, and the music just bled out of us. I was on the most positive kick I've ever been on. When I wrote lyrics like, *'A new level of confidence and power'*, it was fuckin' true, man!"

"One of our favourite things to do at the studio was this game called Twist And Hurl," adds Vinnie. "You'd drink one of these little bottles of beer and guzzle it until you finished it, and then you had to spin and throw it at this stop sign; if you hit it, you won. And we'd do that just about every night. We'd drink tons of these little beers, so we had ammunition.

"And then one night we did it, and these flashlights popped up through the trees and there were, like, five cops there ready to arrest us. I don't know how we talked our way out of it!"

The idea for the album title came from Phil, although it took him a while to realise that he'd actually got it from a line in the movie *The Exorcist*.

"The phrase 'Vulgar Display Of Power' jumped out at me, and where it came from didn't hit me until later. And then I was like, 'Oh, it's from *The Exorcist*!' Nice line there, William Peter Blatty [who wrote the novel and screenplay].

"We told our label we wanted a picture of something vulgar, like this dude getting punched in the face [for the album cover]. Then the label brought us the first version of the album cover, which was a boxer with a punching glove, and we were like, 'Wrong, dude. It's gotta be street.' They got it right with the second version. One of the people at the label told us this dude was paid $10 a punch, and it took 30 real punches to his face to get the perfect image."

The album was released on February 25, 1992, and was the first from Pantera to chart, reaching Number 44 in America, where it has now sold more than two million copies. In the UK, it made it to number 64, and has sold in excess of 100,000 copies. Pantera had finally arrived as a significant metal force on the widest possible scale.

Says Vinnie: "All I can say is it was one of those unique times when the band was still so hungry. We were making $150 a week (per diems). We weren't making a pay cheque. We were just doing it, because we loved music and had fun jamming together. We were a team. We were brothers."

Says Phil: "Being onstage and playing songs like *Walk*, *Mouth For War* and motherfucking *Fucking Hostile*… whoa shit, man. That was a powerful statement. The aggression, the intensity, the stripped raw and bleeding emotion of those songs connected with the audience in a dangerous way. We had a blast playing them, because they were more real to us and I think – no, I know – the people watching knew we were the real deal."

With hindsight, this has become one of the most iconic and inspirational metal albums of all time. A totem for so much that has happened since. Nobody is more aware of its significance than Phil Anselmo, who looks back with a reverence close to awe on what he helped to achieve.

"When we did *Vulgar Display Of Power*, I never said, 'OK, I'm out to make one for the books.' Of course, we wanted to set personal goals and make ourselves a happy band, but I guess I'm still finding out what kind of an impact that album had.

"Two whole generations have gone by since then, and so many variations of music have come and gone. And I still see kids who are 14 to 20 years old but just rabid Pantera fans, because their dads were rabid fans, and that's what they grew up listening to in the house. And that just blows me away. And I can hear actual Pantera riffs in a lot of today's bands and yesterday's bands as well. When that started happening, I think that's when I realised the impact we had made."

And it's an impact that resonates right into the 21st century. ✠

THE NEXT CHAPTER…

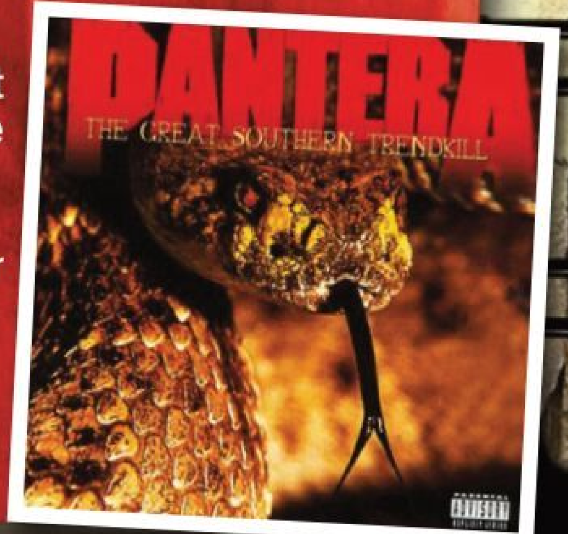
If *Vulgar Display Of Power* was a stunning high, then what followed in 1994 was an ever bigger success. The band's next album, *Far Beyond Driven*, debuted at number one in the US. Pantera even got a Grammy nomination for the song *I'm Broken*. But things started going wrong.

The quartet played at the Monsters Of Rock Festival at Donington in June 1994, yet weeks later Phil was charged with assault, after hitting a security guard who tried to prevent fans from getting onstage. By 1995, Phil's use of heroin and alcohol had become so excessive that it drove an irreversible wedge between him and the rest of Pantera. A year later, *The Great Southern Trendkill* emphasised the growing gulf between singer and band. While the musicians recorded in Dallas, Phil did his vocals at Trent Reznor's studio in New Orleans. Still, it did reach number four on the US charts, and matched the sales of *Far Beyond Driven*.

However, when the singer overdosed on heroin in June 1996, it shocked the rest of Pantera. His continuingly erratic behaviour made the relationship even worse.

The live album *Official Live: 101 Proof* kept things ticking over, getting to a respectable number 15 in the US, but after the release of *Reinventing The Steel* in 2000, the band appeared to be on their last legs. Although it reached number four in the US, sales dropped to just over 500,000 – and within a year it was effectively over. A European tour was cut short by the events of 9/11, and plans for another studio album were scrapped.

Pantera officially broke up in 2003, amid bitter accusations. The shocking murder of Dimebag Darrell in December 2004 and the death of his brother Vinnie Paul in 2018 means that we will never see the band back onstage in all their glory.

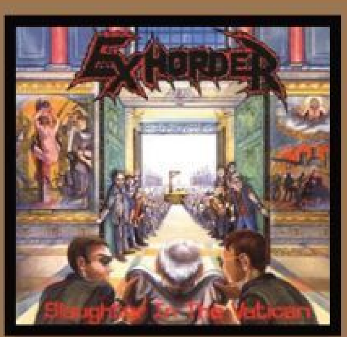


SOMEWHERE IN TIME

Where Pantera stand in the chain of inspiration.

JUDAS PRIEST
British Steel

In 1980, Priest stripped the blues from Black Sabbath's blueprint, donned studded leather and released this masterpiece. It's still the definitive metal album.

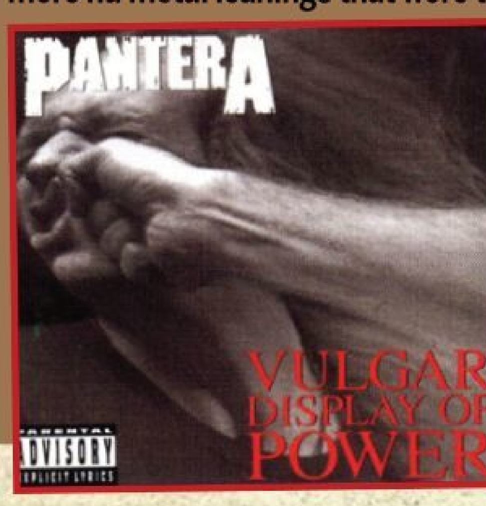


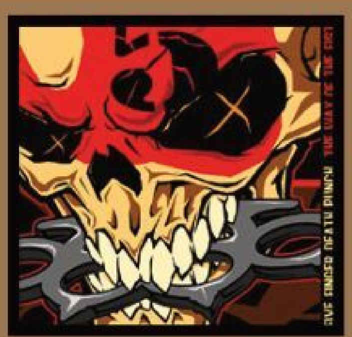
EXHORDER
Slaughter In The Vatican

New Orleans thrashers who were the first to add groove into the mix. Believed to be the band who inspired Pantera to ditch the glam.

PANTERA
Vulgar Display Of Power

Perhaps the epitome of all that's great about this band. The link between old-school thrash and the more nu metal leanings that were to emerge later in the 1990s. But far more than a mere bridge, it's among the finest metal albums of all time. Titanic and utterly essential.





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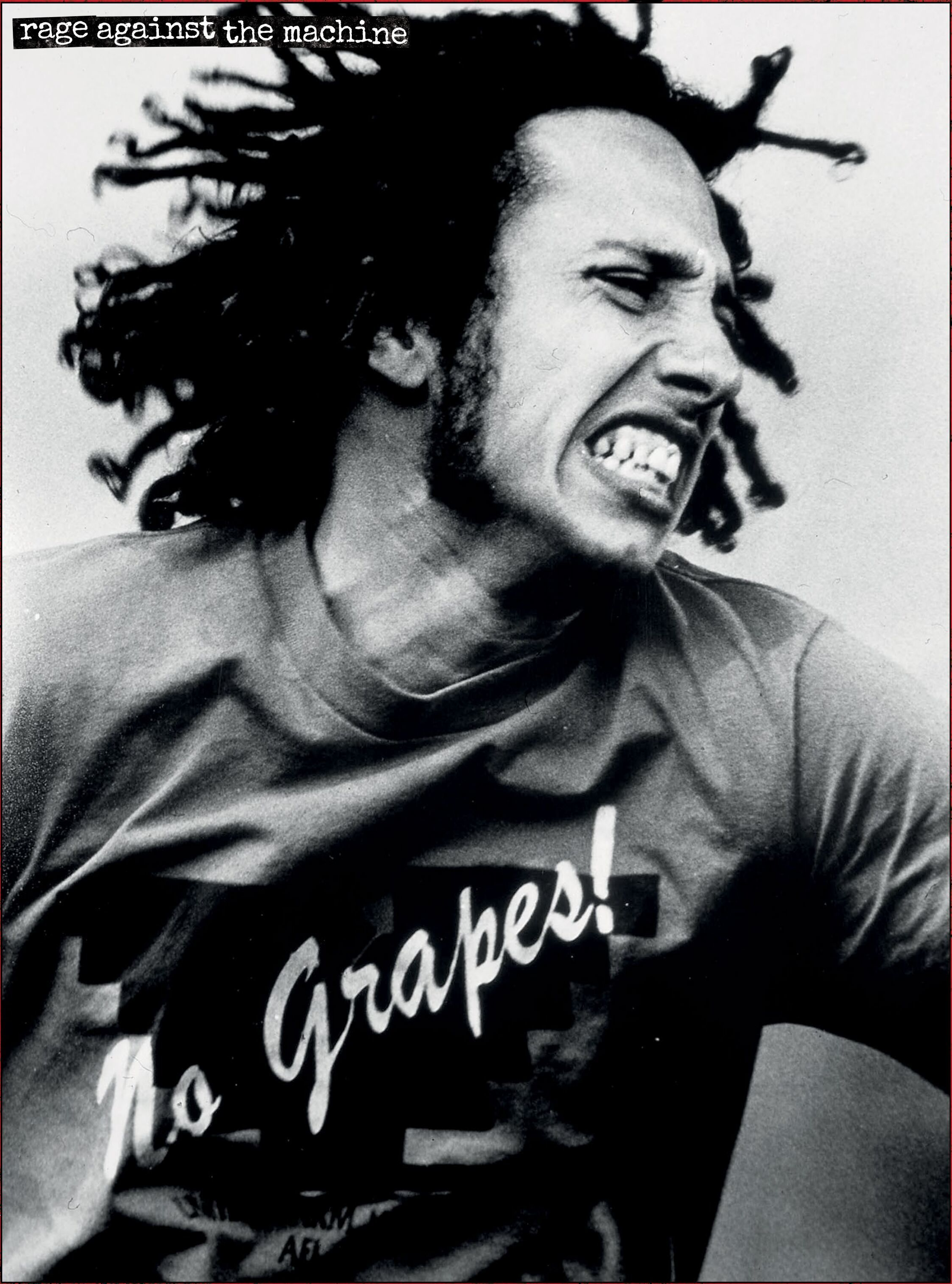


TONY WOOLLISCROFT/ICONICPIX

"We were a fucking livewire"

IN 1992, FOUR YOUNG, REBELLIOUS FIREBRANDS FROM LOS ANGELES RELEASED AN ALBUM THAT WOULD CHANGE HEAVY MUSIC FOREVER. WE TALK TO THE FORMER MEMBERS OF RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE – PLUS PRODUCER GARTH RICHARDSON – ABOUT THE DEBUT ALBUM THAT SPARKED A REVOLUTION

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

It was early evening on Sunday, February 21, 1993 when the balloon went up. To the majority of people listening to Radio 1's weekly chart rundown, the name Rage Against The Machine meant nothing. Why would it? A brand new band mixing metal and hip hop like no one had done before, they'd yet to make an impact outside of the nation's rock clubs or the stereos of the more clued-in metal fan.

And so, when presenter Bruno Brookes cheerfully announced that their new single, *Killing In The Name*, had entered the charts at No.27 and cued the song up, neither he nor several million listeners knew what was about to happen.

The song started with a coiled guitar and tense bassline, as some guy rapped about the American police force's inherent racism with palpable vitriol in his voice: *'Some of those who work forces are the same who burn crosses.'* Then – boom! – the whole thing suddenly erupted. Over guitars that sounded like a thousand police sirens wailing all at once, the line *'Fuck you I won't do what you tell me!'* blasted out of radio speakers everywhere, not just once, not twice, but *16* times. And then, suddenly, it reached its gloriously profane crescendo with one word hurled out with all the anger and pain that could possibly be mustered: *'MOTHERFUCKER!'*

Understandably, the snafu prompted a deluge of complaints to the BBC from offended listeners. Bruno Brookes, who was unaware that an unedited version of the song had accidentally been aired, was suspended for a week and almost lost his job. In just three and a half minutes, a group of political agitators from Los Angeles had detonated a bomb live on the airwaves.

"We knew the band's politics were radical," says guitarist Tom Morello today. "And that the band's music was a radical combination of styles. But we didn't think it was going to matter, 'cos no one was ever going to hear it."

But people did hear it, in their millions. Rage Against The Machine were about to start a four-man revolution.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Rage Against The Machine's debut album. Even now, a quarter of a century after it exploded like a car bomb under the hood of mainstream culture, that record has lost none of its power, impact or provocative fervour. It was the sound of Public Enemy yoked to Black Flag, of Dr Martin Luther King and Malcolm X set to a soundtrack of cutting-edge metal.

Rage arrived as the gloriously shallow, MTV-driven rock scene of the 1980s was flat on the canvas with bluebirds fluttering around its head, laid out by the emergent grunge movement. In America, a new generation of hip hop bands was providing a vital social commentary, marrying the gritty reality of the streets with the violent glamour of a Hollywood crime blockbuster. All this was happening against a backdrop of global turmoil, racial tension and the threat of war in the Middle East. In hindsight, their timing was perfect.

In reality, it was accidental. Vocalist Zack de la Rocha, guitarist Tom Morello, bassist Timmy C (aka Tim Commerford) and drummer Brad Wilk had been in various low-level LA bands, including hardcore firebrands Inside Out (Zack) and Lock Up (Tom, who played on their sole album, the unfortunately titled *Something Bitchin' This Way Comes*).

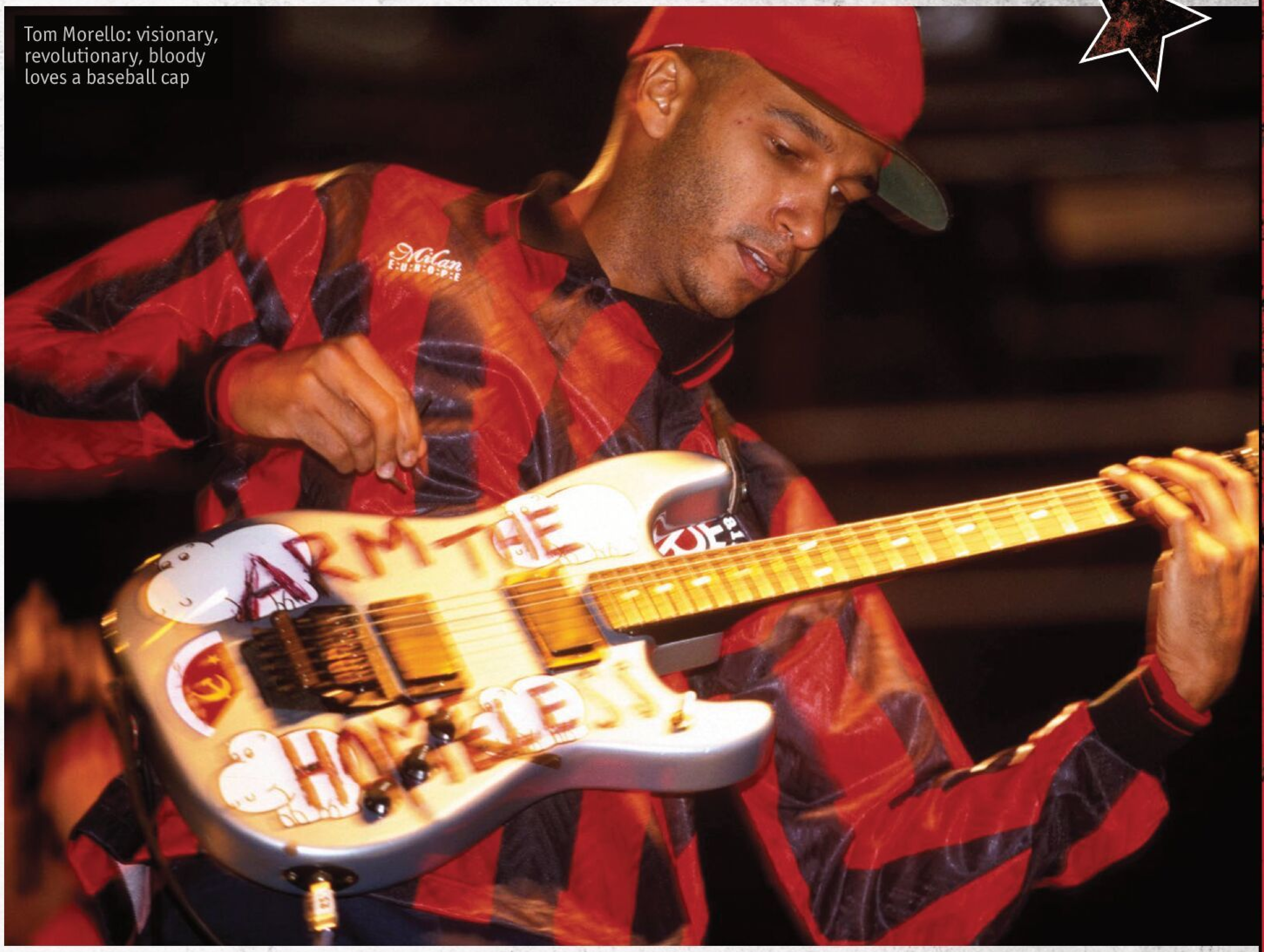
"I had been in a band that had a record deal, I had already had my grab at the brass ring," says Tom. "The band got dropped and I was 26 years old, and I thought that was it. I thought, 'If I'm not going to be a rock star, or make albums, I'm at least going to play music that I believe in 100%.' And I was fortunate to meet three people who felt very similarly."

The four were brought together by various mutual friends, though Zack and Tim had known each other since childhood. Zack and Tom came from similarly radical backgrounds – Zack was the son of Mexican-American political artist Robert de la Rocha, Tom was the son of a white American activist mother and a Kenyan diplomat father. Growing up, both had experienced racism first hand, and bonded over their hard-left political views – views that would shape Rage from the off.

"I wanted to ensure the protection of this band's integrity," said Zack in 1999. "Our words had to be backed up by actions, because we're dealing with this huge, monstrous pop culture that has a tendency to suck everything that is culturally resistant to it into it in order to pacify it and make it non-threatening."

Ironically, for a band who would go on to become one of themost successful of the 1990s, Rage Against The Machine saw their very existence as limiting what they could achieve.

"We began with zero commercial ambition," says Tom. "I didn't think we'd be able to book a gig in a club, let alone get a record deal. There was no market for multi-racial, neo-Marxist rap-metal punk rock bands. That didn't exist. So we made this music that was just 100% authentic, it was 100% what we felt like playing. We had no expectations."



Tom Morello: visionary, revolutionary, bloody loves a baseball cap

GETTY

"WE DIDN'T THINK ANYONE WOULD HEAR US"

TOM MORELLO DIDN'T FORESEE RAGE EXPLODING

Still, it was clear to the members of Rage from the start that they were onto something unique. Brad Wilk can vividly recollect the band's very first rehearsal.

Zack de la Rocha preaches to the newly converted at London's Brixton Academy in 1993

GETTY

"More than anything, I remember this connection and movement and momentum that was happening in the room," he says. "Something clicked. I played so well with Tim and Tom, and then we had Zack, who was a bolt of lightning, flying off my kick drum and was in it for real. There was something really special about what we were doing. We weren't analysing it or putting our fingers on it yet. It was just an intense moment for us all. We saw the very beginning of the potential we could have."

Like so many Californian bands before them, Rage's first gig took place not at a club but at a party, in Huntington Beach, in the sprawling suburb of Orange County, south of Los Angeles.

"It was a party in a house, and the place felt electric," says Tim Commerford. "A lot of our songs didn't even have vocals at that time. In fact, we played a version of *Killing In The Name* that was just the music – he hadn't got the vocals done. You could feel the electricity. It felt like holding on to a fucking live wire. That's what it was: a live wire. And it kept getting more and more live."

Collectively, Rage were fans of hip hop, and Tom recalls the band's early days being sound-tracked by the likes of Public Enemy and Cypress Hill. But while hip hop provided a big steer for the band, it wasn't their sole influence. All four had grown up on guitar music ranging from 70s rock and 80s metal to punk.

"Our histories run deep, that's why we were the band we were," says Brad. "We didn't just listen to hip hop, we listened to all kinds of things, from Black Sabbath to Led Zeppelin to Minor Threat and the Sex Pistols. When we were getting together, we agreed that we wanted our record to sound somewhere between Ice Cube's *AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted* and Led Zeppelin's *Houses Of The Holy*."

In March, Rage embarked on their first proper tour as openers for Public Enemy. Thanks to the controversies whipped up by the US media around 'gangsta rap' acts such as NWA and Ice-T, mainstream America had a poisonous – read: virulently racist – relationship with hip hop, and trouble was never far away. It was the perfect environment for Rage Against The Machine.

"The tour was a needlessly controversial one," says Tom. "At the time, rap was considered a dangerous endeavour, and the police sometimes outnumbered the audience at these shows. They tried to shut several down, filed injunctions – none of which were successful, I might add. We were playing these colleges, and the audience would be 100% white fraternity boys and sorority girls, passing through five levels of metal detectors and pat-downs. I think the cops were afraid that we were going to be bussing in Bloods and Crips [gang members] to the show. There was an air of hysteria."

Today, the guitarist still expresses bafflement that anyone at all would want to take a chance on Rage Against Their Machine and their political message, let alone a corporate record company. But their 12-track demo tape found its way into the hands of Michael Goldstone, the Epic Records A&R hotshot who'd previously signed Pearl Jam.

"Our only goal was to make music for ourselves and to make our own record – a cassette tape, an elaborate demo tape of the 12 songs we had written," says Tom. "That was our entire goal. We never thought we'd play a show. We never thought we'd make a record."

Garth Richardson was a young Canadian studio engineer whose biggest credit came on an album

Rage Against The Machine (left to right): Tom Morello, Zack de la Rocha, Tim Commerford, Brad Wilk

ROSS HALFIN

A youthful Rage play Wetlands Preserve, New York in 1992

FRANK WHITE

by hair metal B-listers White Lion. But he was young and hungry, and when Epic asked his boss, producer Michael Wagener, who should work on the debut album by this hot new rap-metal band they had signed, he was an obvious choice.

"I got the demo tape and went, 'Holy shit.' There was nothing else like it," he recalls. "I went over to see them play in their jam space. I think they played me four songs, and I was blown away, to the point where I couldn't talk afterwards, because my stutter was so bad. I was like, 'Are you fucking kidding me – I'm going to be doing this band?' It was their power, and also what Zack was saying. It was so fresh and so new."

Rage began recording their debut album with Garth in March 1992. Seven of the 12 tracks from the demo tape, including *Killing In The Name*, *Bomb Track* and *Bullet In The Head*, would appear on the album.

"The songs were probably about 85 to 90% there," remembers Garth. We made a few changes, mostly lyrically. Literally, somebody just had to capture them."

To achieve this, the producer brought in a full concert PA system to get the full impact of the band's live firepower. This was undiluted Rage – though sometimes it created unforeseen problems.

"The problem is that sometimes Zack's voice went," says Garth. "He was working it so hard. The end of *Freedom*, where he's screaming, *'Freedom!'*, that's just one take. Every time he sang, he gave it his all. Anybody that wanted him to hold back, he was, like, 'No, fuck off, leave me alone.'"

Given the incendiary lyrical subject matter, there was surprisingly little input from Epic. They seemed to learn their lesson after suggesting the band remove the line *'Now you're under control'* from

"COPS WERE AFRAID. THERE WAS HYSTERIA"

POLICE WERE DAUNTED BY RAGE'S HIP HOP CONNECTIONS

Killing In The Name. "There was a big conversation about that," remembers Garth. "And the band just said, 'Fuck you, that part stays.'"

Killing In The Name would be the song that broke the band in the UK. For six months, it soundtracked every rock club in the country, its impassioned call-to-arms galvanising dancefloors of people out to party. Yet, like so many of the great songs, it came about by accident.

"I remember coming up with that riff," says Tom. "I was giving guitar lessons at the time, and I was teaching some Hollywood rock musician how to do drop-D tuning. In the midst of showing him, I came up with that riff. I said, 'Hold on a second', and I recorded it on my little cassette recorder to bring into the rehearsal the next day, never realising that it would be the genesis of a song that would have that lasting impact."

In April 1992, a series of riots erupted in Los Angeles when four white policemen were acquitted of beating African-American motorist Rodney King, despite the assault being filmed by a witness standing onhis balcony.For America,it was a moment of chaos. For Rage AgainstThe Machine, who had already recorded their debut album and would release it in November, the timing was unfortunately convenient.

"All of those songs were written prior tothe Rodney King riots," says Tom. "In some ways the record was prescient, in that it saw this maelstrom of racial strife and imperialist war on the horizon. When the record hit, it was a fertile field for us to have the ear of audiences around the world."

Rage were proudly revolutionary – too revolutionary for America, who were slow to catch on. Britain

Rage see no evil, speak no evil in the early 90s

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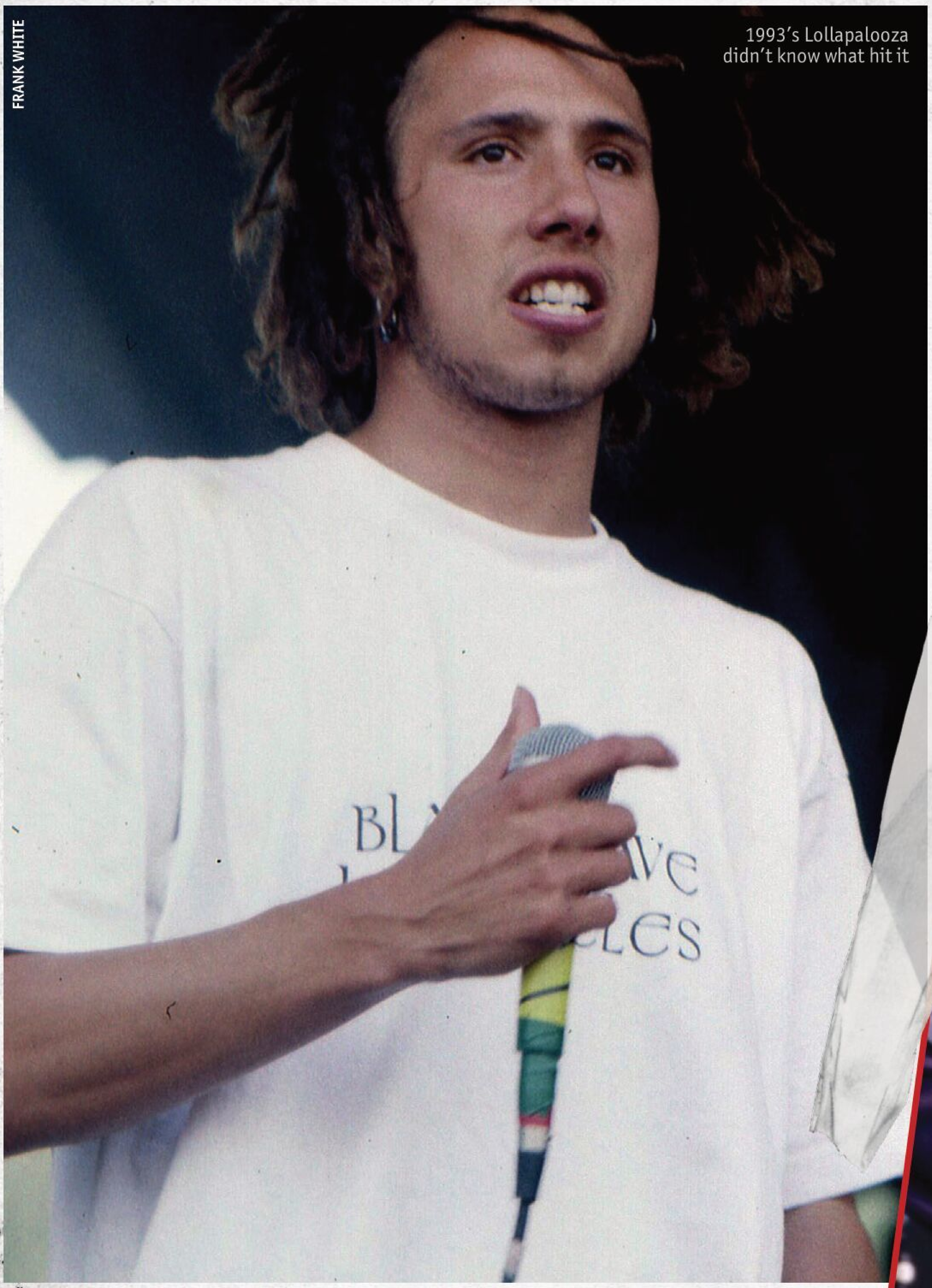
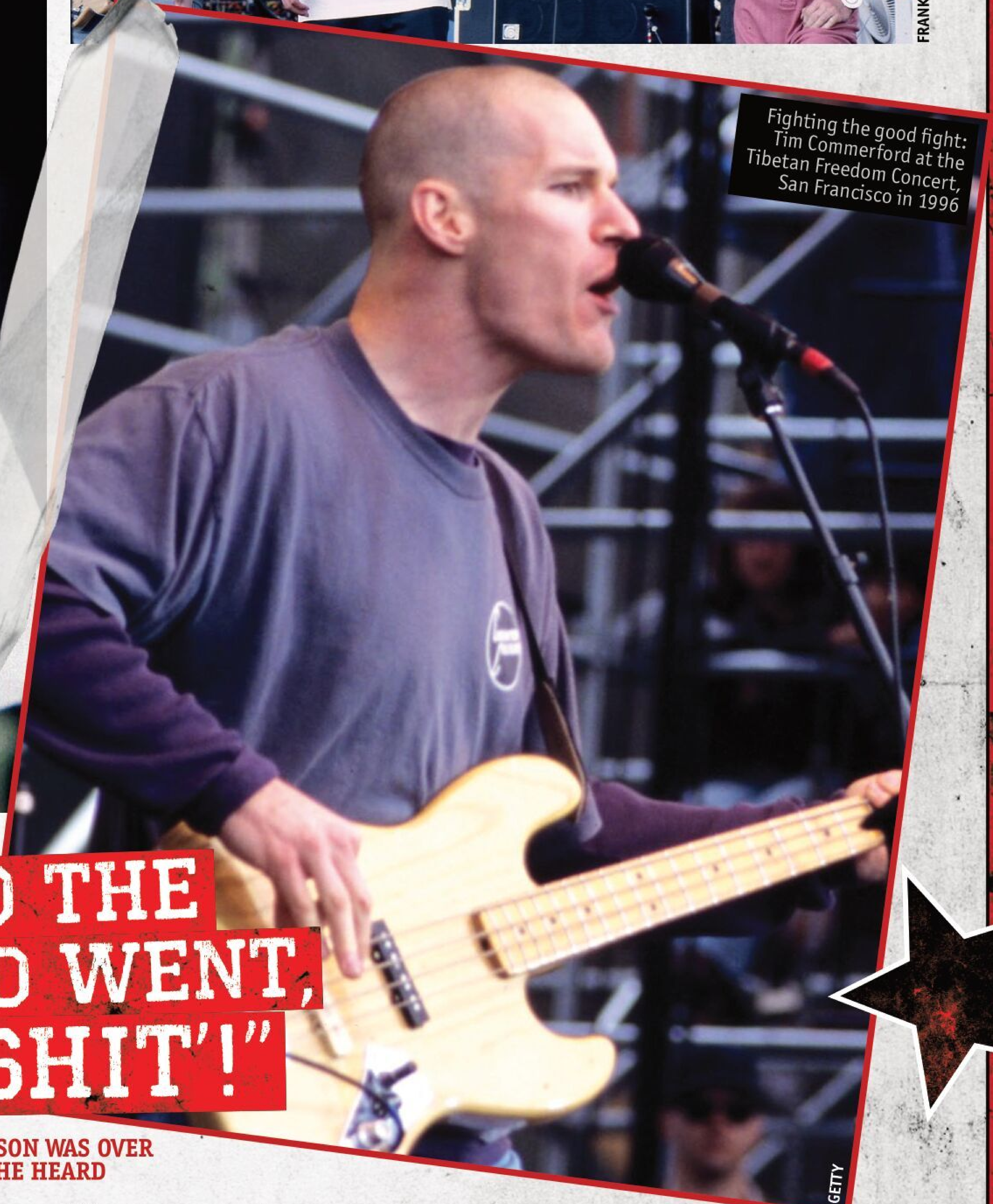


1993's Lollapalooza didn't know what hit it

Tool's Maynard James Keenan was in the running to be the frontman of Rage, and actually sings on *Know Your Enemy*. He guested with them at festivals, such as this July 1993 Lollapalooza show



Fighting the good fight: Tim Commerford at the Tibetan Freedom Concert, San Francisco in 1996

was a different matter, as Bruno Brookes' unfortunate Radio 1 mishap proved.

"The UK was the first place people lost their minds over this music," says Tom. "One ofthe principal reasons was that there were more lax lyrical censorship laws on your MTV and radio. We never edited the curse words out of songs, so people in the United States couldn't even hear them on MTV, they couldn't hear them on radio. And secondly, people over there were surprised to hear an American band that had a view of America that was similar to Europe's view of America."

From that small spark,a conflagration began to spread, as word about Rage Against The Machine grew. Their snowballing success had the desired effect, as a generation – or at least sections of it – began to wake up to the messages they were delivering through the bullhorn of their songs. Musically, too, they dragged the dormant rap-metal movement that had briefly flared up in the late 1980s back out of its stupor (in Bakersfield, California, the members of a brand newband named Korn were certainly paying attention to what Rage were doing).

Plus, society was changing fast in the early 90s. While sexism, racism and homophobia were still unfortunately prevalent, there was growing opposition to such outdated outlooks. Rage AgainstThe Machine took it several steps further, crediting Black Panthers founder Huey Newton and Provisional IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands on the credits list to their album – a contentious move on both sides of the Atlantic. The sleeve itself featureda 1963 picture of Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Duc setting himself on fire in protestof his government's oppression of Buddhism. It was the ultimate visual representationof protest.

"I HEARD THE DEMO AND WENT, 'HOLY SHIT'!"

PRODUCER GARTH RICHARDSON WAS OVER THE MOON WITH WHAT HE HEARD

"My heroes were not guys in rock bands," says Tom. "They were revolutionaries who were fighting to change the world. It looked like we were going to have an opportunity to get in that arena. This was an incredible opportunity to engage the planet – not just with our music, but with our ideas."

The success of *Rage Against The Machine* took everyone by surprise, not least Rage Against The Machine. They rapidly went from being the outcasts of the Hollywood scene to a lightning rod for the alt-rock movement. Rather than blunting their political edge, success only sharpened it – most famously in 1993, when they took to the stage at a Lollapalooza festival show in Philadelphia naked, apart from gaffa tape over their mouths, as a protest against censorship.

But the pressure-cooker environment that comes with being in a revolutionary left-wing band eventually took its toll. Tensions between the band members grew, and Rage split up in 2000 after just three studio albums. They have sporadically reformed since – most famously for a one-off gig in London's Finsbury Park, after a fan-led campaign saw a reissued *Killing In The Name* trounce the Simon Cowell-backed *X-Factor* winner Joe McElderry to the 2009 Christmas No.1. But they have been inactive since 2011 – a situation that looks unlikely to change soon, with Zack working on new solo material and the other three members now in rap-metal supergroup Prophets Of Rage (see page 44).

A quarter of a century after it was released, however, Rage's debut remains a landmark – the point where rap and metal truly came together to deliver a body-blow to the status quo.

"Human strife has not changed. Racism has not changed. Things have actually gone backwards," says Garth Richardson. "Rage Against The Machine wrote an incredible record that was current – and it will be time and time and time again."

SLEEPLESS IN SEA

"WE HATED COMMERCIAL MUSIC. AND THEN WE BECAME THAT THING. THAT WAS A MOMENT OF CRISIS."
CHRIS CORNELL

TTLE

Grunge's founding fathers, **Soundgarden** watched the bands they inspired shoot past them. But with their mighty fourth album, *Superunknown,* they would help define the 1990s.

WORDS: IAN WINWOOD **PORTRAIT:** ROSS HALFIN

It begins with a simple question. On the line is Ben Shepherd, bassist with Soundgarden, and a man whose speaking voice sounds like Tom Waits were his batteries running down. With a truck driver's abruptness and heavily creased look, 'rustic' would be a good word to describe him. This evening Shepherd is on the stump to talk about his band's fourth album, the timeless *Superunknown*, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. I ask him what it is that he hears when he listens to the album now.

"I've never listened to it," Shepherd says in a voice that sounds like a heavy door slowly creaking shut.

Right. What?

"I've never listened to it. I turned my back on it."

Okay. And why did you do that?

"Because it went to number one. I thought, Oh crap, we're now one of *those* bands. Fuck everything," he says. When Shepherd says this, he sounds not like a well-cossetted rock musician who has earned significant wealth from his trade, but rather like his younger self: a man whose band were once signed to Black Flag guitarist Greg Ginn's avowedly do-it-your-fucking-self label SST, and who has never risen above this station.

"I don't like the production of that record," he says. "I don't like how it sounds. I don't like how it looks. If people like it then I'm flattered and I'm honoured and all that 'make people happy bullshit'. But, for me, when an album is done, it's done, it's time to move on to something else."

Here – and there is a reasonable chance that he knows this – Shepherd is talking out of his hat. Even before the passage of time had enabled listeners to properly separate the wheat from the Weetabix of the rock music released in the 1990s, it was obvious that *Superunknown* was the most exceptional offering from a band whose overall body of work is rarely less than exceptional. Painted on a canvas that may as well have been hung on the side of a 15-storey apartment building, the 16-song set cruised from the impossibly claustrophobic (*Limo Wreck, 4th Of July*) to the oddly anthemic (*Superunknown, Black Hole Sun*) to the downright playful (*Kickstand*). The album – as Soundgarden themselves would never dream of putting it – exploded into the sky, debuting at No.1 on the US *Billboard* Hot 200 chart and going on to sell more than five million copies in the US alone.

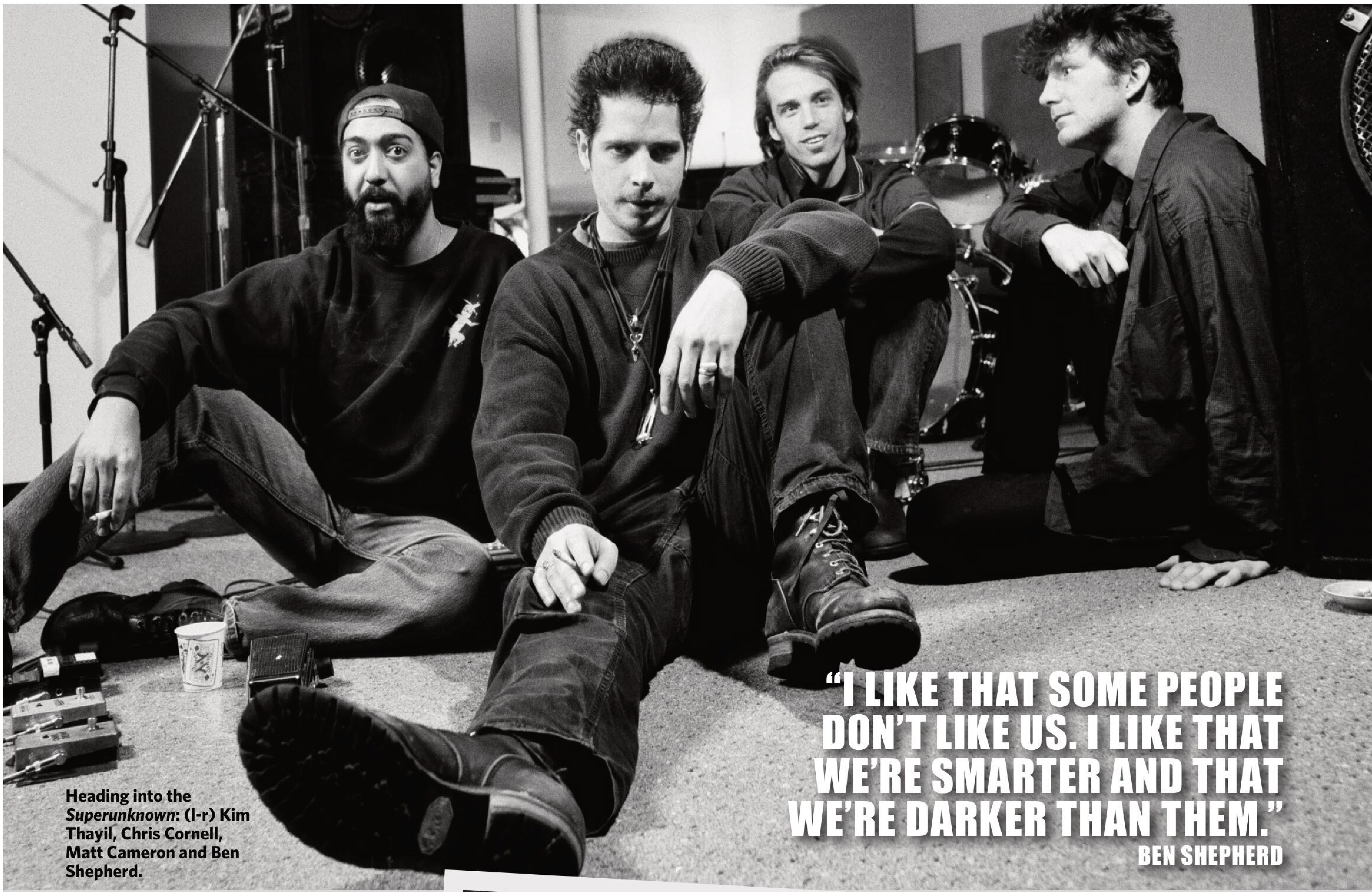
"Musically we were ready to try on a lot of new clothes, in a sense," says singer and occasional guitarist Chris Cornell, a man whose squeeze-my-lemon looks and captivating voice gave his band an organic, classic rock quality. "Although we had only been known internationally for a couple of years, we had been a band for quite a long time by that point. So we needed to express ourselves differently… And for me personally, I finally had the tools to take the music I heard in my head and express it in the way that I really wanted to."

Smile if you think your album's going to sell a few.

The album that would elevate its creators to much the same level as some of the bands they initially influenced shimmered into view in increments, the fragments of which can be traced back well before its release in March 1994. Four years previously the group were riding on the Santa Monica Freeway when the radio station KROQ tossed *Get On The Snake* on to the air. The song was from the group's second album and major-label debut *Louder Than Love*, as gnarled and testing a record as Soundgarden would ever make. Cornell couldn't believe that his band were being played on a mainstream US rock station. He was also struck by how at home the song sounded on the radio, even though "it was different from everything else that was being played".

Of course, this was at a time when the tectonic plates beneath the very foundations of modern rock music were soon to buckle and crack. The site of all this activity was not located on the San Andreas fault, but the hitherto unheralded and charmingly rain-soaked North-Western city of Seattle. Before you could say 'the times they are a-changing', Soundgarden had been joined at the major label table by fellow Seattle-ites and kindred spirits Mother Love Bone, Alice In Chains, Nirvana and, later, Pearl Jam. Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic claims that it was Soundgarden's decision to sign with A&M Records – and the advice given by the latter's then-manager, Susan Silver – that had given his own three-piece group the confidence to sign with the Geffen label.

And then it all happened. Within four weeks of each other, Nirvana released *Nevermind* and Pearl Jam unveiled *Ten*, and suddenly scores of well-groomed hard rock and metal bands found that overnight their futures had been cancelled and their pasts negated. With what was at the time almost a footnote, on October 8, 1991 Soundgarden released their third album, *Badmotorfinger*, a record that, despite paling in comparison to these other two



Heading into the *Superunknown*: (l-r) Kim Thayil, Chris Cornell, Matt Cameron and Ben Shepherd.

"I LIKE THAT SOME PEOPLE DON'T LIKE US. I LIKE THAT WE'RE SMARTER AND THAT WE'RE DARKER THAN THEM."
BEN SHEPHERD

albums, would sell more than a million copies in America.

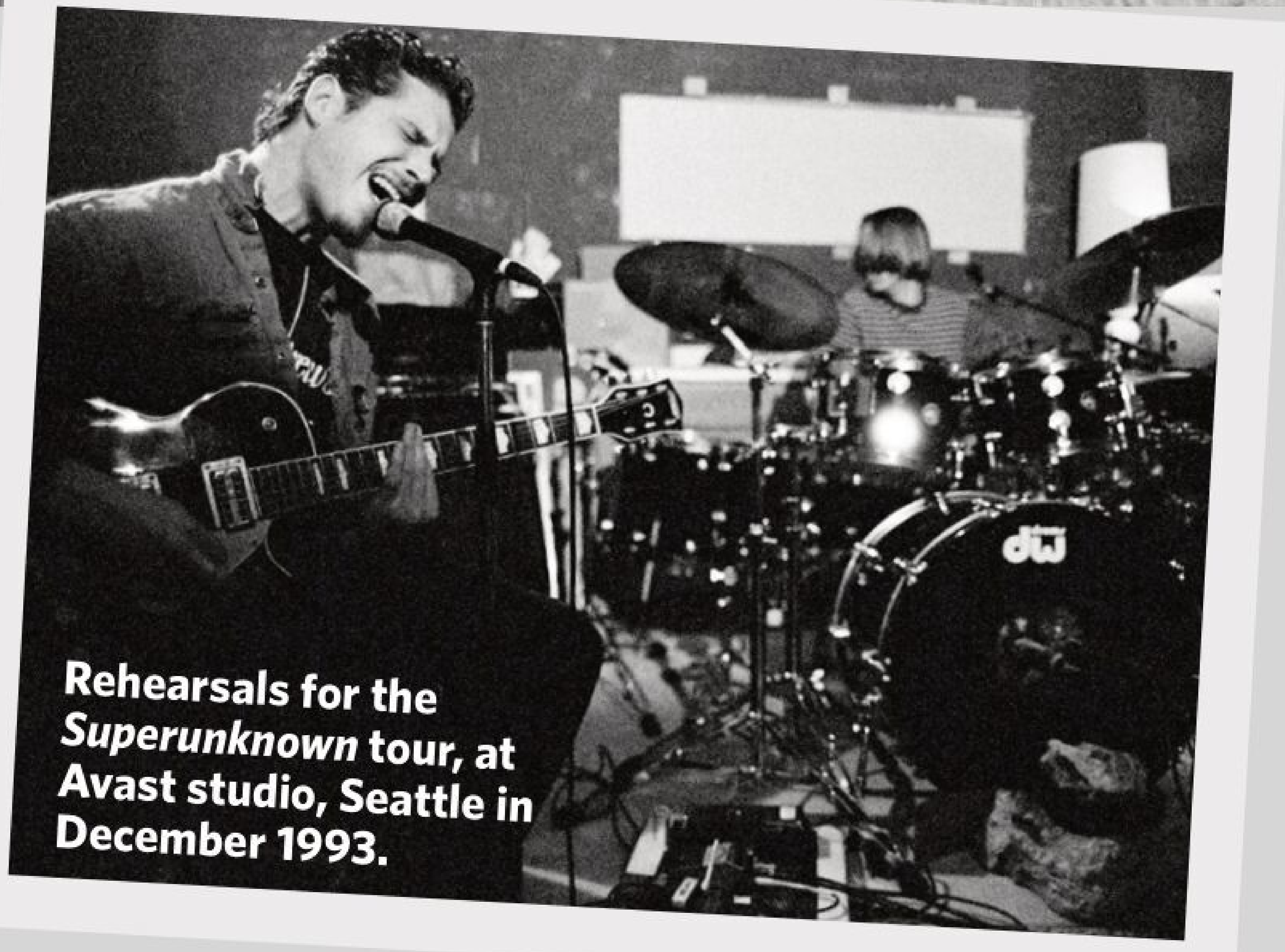
Suddenly – and it really was *very* sudden indeed – it wasn't so much a case of the Jet City being placed on the map, but rather there no longer being any maps at all, just a handwritten sign that pointed to one destination: Seattle.

"When *Nevermind* came out and *Ten* came out, this was the year that we released our fourth album," says Soundgarden guitarist Kim Thayil. "We'd been a band then for seven years. We'd toured the country more than once in a van. So I think we definitely did look at those albums and think, well we've definitely paid our dues, so it would be nice if we had a bit of that actual success rather than just critical acclaim, you know? At the time, we were getting by pretty much on positive [press] reviews alone. It would be nice to be able to buy a home, I remember thinking, because at that time I was living in the same place that I lived in when I went to college. That kind of security would make the emotional and musical investment worthwhile."

Cryptically, Cornell describes the writing process for *Superunknown* as being "as easy or as difficult as we wanted to make them". Writing sessions began after the band's appearance at 1992's Lollapalooza tour. The process was reactive, rather than mapped out in advance.

"We'd listen to the material we'd gotten together and then analyse what we had, what we felt about it and what it said about where we were as a band," says Thayil. "Nothing was premeditated. We weren't the kind of band that talked about that kind of stuff."

"I can't say that we knew that what we had was significant in a wider sense," says Cornell, "but



Rehearsals for the *Superunknown* tour, at Avast studio, Seattle in December 1993.

I think we knew that what we were writing was different from what we'd done before. I knew that internally we were now really stretching our limbs."

Recording sessions for the album began at Bad Animals Studios in Seattle in July '93 and ran for almost three months. In an effort to fully re-imagine their sound, the band took the unusual decision to record each track one at a time. It was an exacting process. And in order to help shape their material in the unforgiving confines of the studio they enlisted the services of a producer whose pursuit of specific sounds for certain songs was recognised as being relentless.

Michael Beinhorn began his musical life as a musician in the 1970s. As a producer he made his bow with the great jazz pianist Herbie Hancock, and by the time Nirvana had rerouted the musical A To Z, he had worked with Red Hot Chili Peppers and Soul Asylum, among others.

"To me, Beinhorn was an innovator," says Ben Shepherd – this despite the bassist claiming to dislike the sound of *Superunknown*. "He totally thought outside of the box. Then again, I'd just go in there, record my parts and then leave."

Kim Thayil remembers the recording experience rather differently. The guitarist says that Soundgarden "were strong-headed enough not to do anything that we didn't want to do", and so Michael Beinhorn's reputation as "a taskmaster wouldn't really have worked with us because we would have stood up to that. He wasn't a drill sergeant, but he could certainly be a monumental pain in the ass. If he got us motivated he did so by being the flea on the elephant's bum."

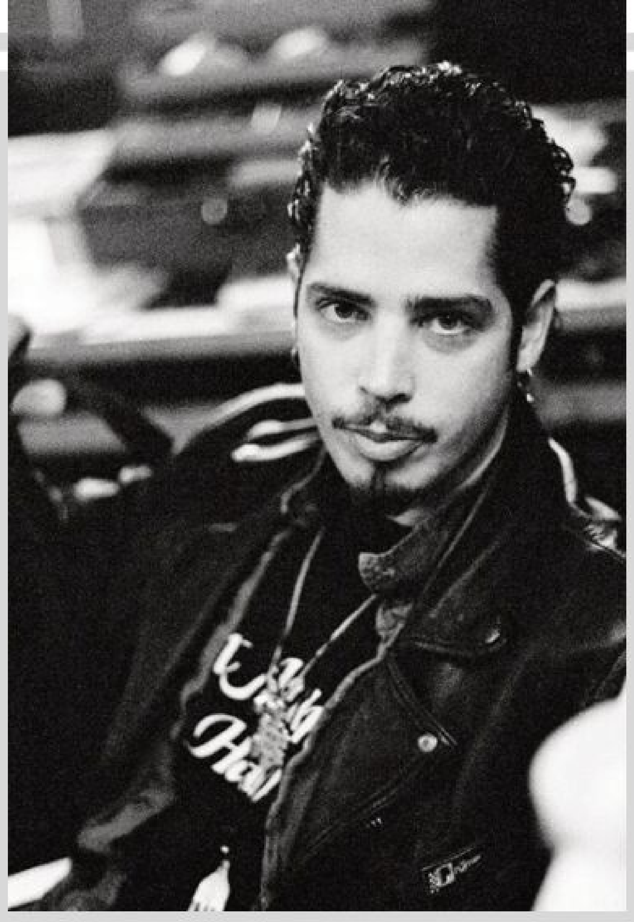
For example?

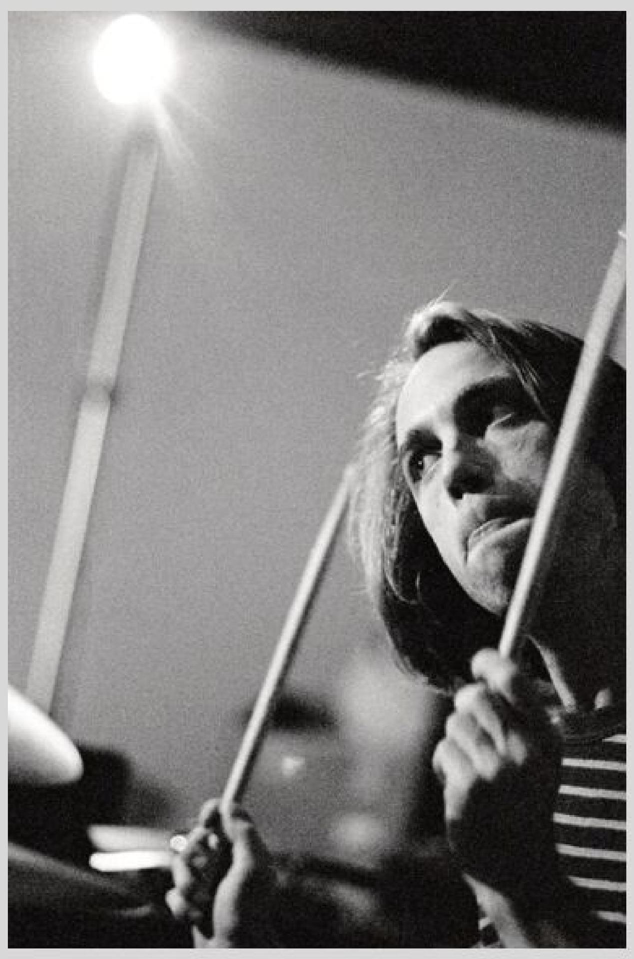
"He was difficult because he'd want us to repeat things over and over again, whereas we wanted things to be fresh; we certainly didn't want to beat something to death. I remember I played the main riff to *Limo Wreck* for about two or three days, over and over again, trying to hone it down and to get the sound right. Now as far as I'm concerned, he's the engineer, so he can be concerned about the sound. If he's having me play a riff over and over again for three days trying to get a good amp sound, then he's wearing out my fingers in order to impress his ears."

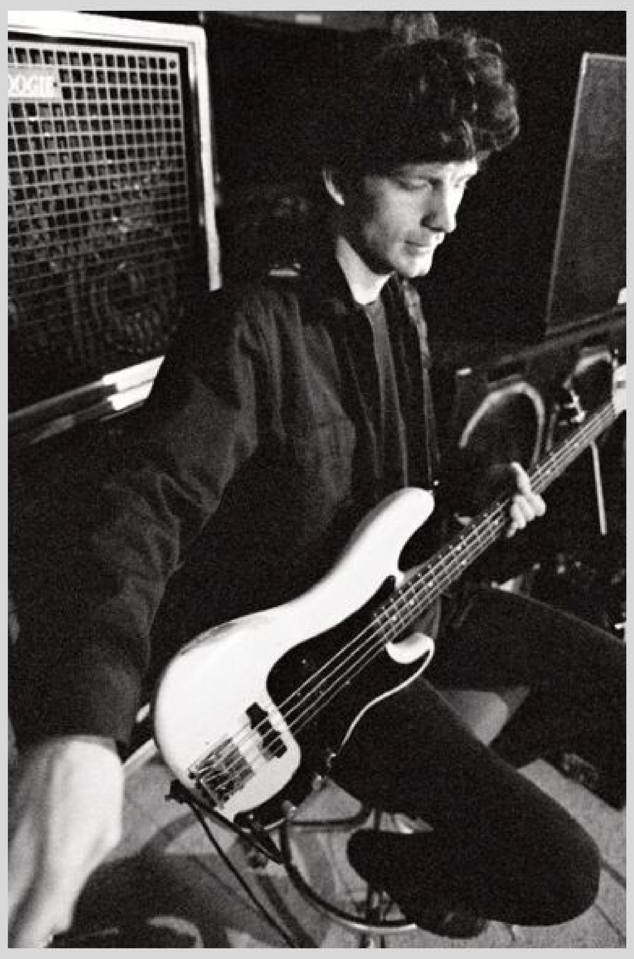
In the intervening years other stories of complications of a different kind have leaked into the public domain. Several years ago, Cornell revealed that he was "drunk" for the recording of Soundgarden's final two albums. On hearing this today, Thayil says: "Chris said he was what? Drunk?" in the same way he might say: "Chris said he was a sabre tooth tiger?"

"Alcohol was never part of our creative process,"

CHARLES PETERSON







says Cornell. "It was never an inspiration for writing songs. If anything, it slowed us down. But if a song was written, then I might get drunk in the studio. There is the thing of making things as difficult for yourself as you can. You still triumph, but if there's no impediments in the way then sometimes you don't really get a sense of achievement out of it. So making things difficult for ourselves was definitely something that we did."

If Cornell – or any other member of Soundgarden, for that matter – was blind drunk during the recording of *Superunknown*, it doesn't show. Mixed by Brendan O'Brien, it was unveiled to the rest of world on March 7, 1994 and a day later in the US. Reviews were effusive, and advance chatter volcanic. Better yet, in the three years that had elapsed since the release of *Badmotorfinger* Soundgarden had been the beneficiaries of that most precious of things: word-of-mouth buzz. The ground, clearly, was prepared for the eruption that followed. Within seven days the album was the most sought-after property in America.

For all their achievements inside and outside of the studio, there was a nagging doubt at the heart of Soundgarden. The profile of other bands from their home town both lessened and enlarged the impact of *Superknown*'s success.

"There was an impact that the record had that was definitely piled on top of all the other success stories that were coming out of Seattle at that time," says Thayil. "We felt that what was good for Nirvana was good for us. Without that context, whatever success *Superunknown* would have had would have been more personal. But because of that wider context, it made the success a lot bigger, but also in some ways a bit smaller, if that makes sense."

A corollary to this was a city-and movement-wide uneasiness regarding the pursuit of commercial success. This was a musical first. The alternative generation of the 1990s was a movement ridden with guilt. And despite the fact that *Superunknown* utilised the marketing and promotional tools of the day with some panache – with videos for the album's five singles (most notably the magnificently creepy clip for *Black Hole Sun*) being shown on heavy rotation on MTV – this was a concern from which Soundgarden were not excused.

"It was the first time that successful bands became very self-conscious about what success would mean for them," says Cornell. "We felt as if we had to explain ourselves. We came from a world where commerce was frowned upon and where it seemed that there had to be some of kind of deception involved in getting mass amounts of people to buy your music. That was the world that we hated. But not just that, we took a platform on the fact that we hated it, as in: 'Look, we hate this – we hate commercial music.' And then we became that thing. So now what do we say? That we were liars? It was a moment of crisis, although I think it was less for us because we weren't a band that had had overnight success.

"But we toured with Guns N' Roses, and saw what the ultimate end result of that kind of thing could be. And that wasn't something we were comfortable with. It wasn't something we aspired to; we were self-conscious on stage in a 60,000-seat stadium."

But then everything changed again. Just a month after *Superunknown* had been introduced to its waiting public, Soundgarden were in Paris, on tour with another Seattle band, Tad, when their tour manager took a call from their then-manager Susan Silver relaying the news that Kurt Cobain had called time on the alternative movement by firing the finishing gun. What followed, according to Chris Cornell, "was a strange and emotional night".

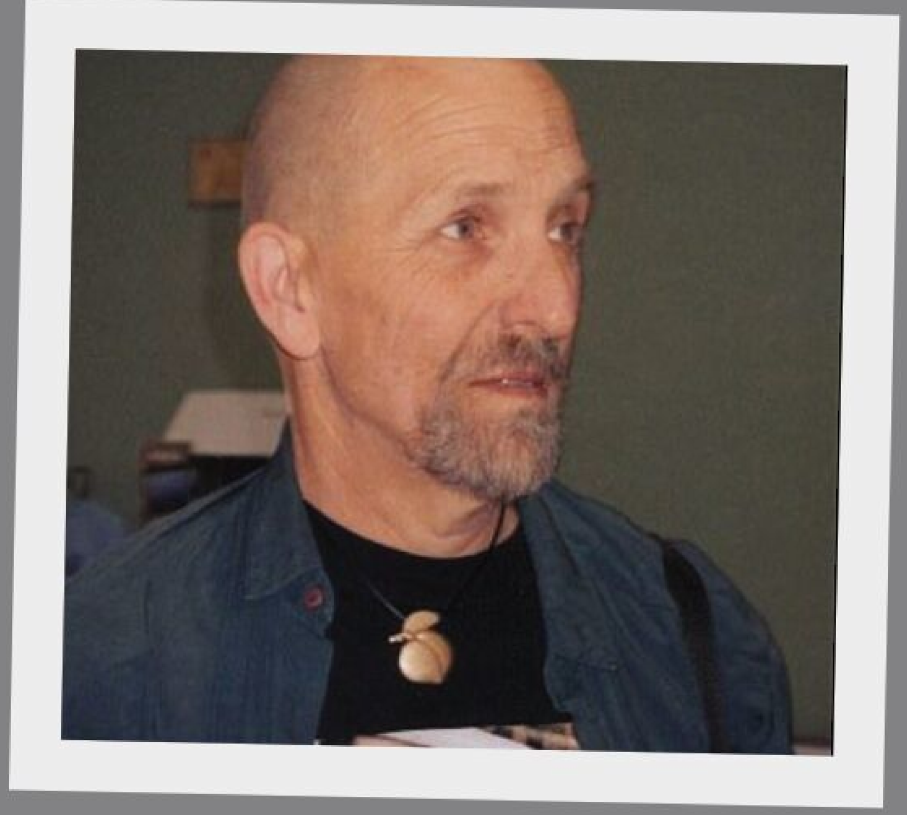
And that, really, was the end of that. On an individual level Soundgarden would continue apace, releasing one more album, *Down On The Upside*, in 1996, before disbanding the following year (they re-formed in 2010 and released the excellent *King Animal* album in 2013). But the passion and energy of the movement as a whole had been sucked from the room. Within months of Cobain's suicide, listeners signalled a weariness with the tone of despondency inherent in much alternative rock. This they did by voting into power a related yet fundamentally different movement, spearheaded by Green Day.

What remains is music that has aced the test of time. Of this, no record stands taller than *Superunknown*, an album that, even a generation on, still stands coiled and rattling with turmoil, trouble and spite. On the subject of which, the final word goes to Ben Shepherd.

"You know," he says, "I like playing the iTunes festivals for those Apple robber barons. We play *Superunknown* and people are all: 'Yay, we're happy!' But then we get to *Limo Wreck* and suddenly they're all: 'Oh, Soundgarden is dark! No wonder they never got to be as big as Pearl Jam.' I like that some people don't like us. I like that we're smarter than them and that we're darker than them."

"PEOPLE WOULD SHOUT OUT: 'SPOONMAN! SAVE ME!'"

Meet the real-life inspiration behind Soundgarden's single.



Of all the people who have inspired songs over the years, few are as interesting as Artis The Spoonman. A street performer from Seattle, he inspired and appeared on Soundgarden's 1994 single, *Spoonman*.

Artis began playing spoons at the age of 10. Following a stint in the US Navy, he began hitchhiking and busking around the country in the early 70s. "I have felt a strong urge to be a musician/performer since I was a young boy," Artis told *Classic Rock*. "Spoons became an inadvertent vehicle. I started making tips in 1974, and lived on it ever since."

In the early 80s, Artis appeared on stage with Frank Zappa. "I played along with a drum machine and got to tell Zappa when to turn it off," he says. "I always thought of it as conducting Zappa."

But it was as an unlikely muse for Soundgarden that Artis shot to prominence. The attention that came via *Spoonman* was welcome. "I'd be driving along and someone would shout out: 'Spoonman! Save me!' It was awesome. I got gigs I wouldn't have gotten for at least a year or two. I'm still celebrated and complimented some places I go."

Post-*Spoonman*, Artis released his own album, *Entertain The Entertainers*, and continued to play on the streets of Seattle and elsewhere. He appeared on stage with Aerosmith ("Steven Tyler called me out of an audience of 10,000 to sit-in"), and Cornell's later band Audioslave.

After a lifetime of struggle with drink and drugs, Artis has been clean and sober for more than five years. He set up a non-profit organisation Artis The Spoonman's Soup Spoon Fund as a vehicle for mental and physical health programs (there are plans for a fundraiser later this year). But does this one-off character have a philosophy for life?

"If you have a philosophy for life, live it and keep your mouth shut about it."

"THERE WERE PEOPLE FIGHTING POLICE OFFICERS AND CARS BEING LIT ON FIRE."

PRESS

In a year of game-changing albums, Machine Head's 1994 debut *Burn My Eyes* stood out. Inspired by riots and religious cults, this is the story behind an absolute classic

WORDS: DOM LAWSON

NYC
COVERS

"I rode my bike through the riots," Robb Flynn remembers, thinking back to the disorder that spread across San Francisco's streets in 1992, sparked by the riots in LA, where more than 50 people would be killed and more than 2,000 injured. The unrest had begun after the acquittal of four white police officers charged with beating black motorist Rodney King. "People were fighting police, cars were being lit on fire. Police were trying to chase me down, gang bangers were trying to chase me down, it was crazy, but I just had to feel that chaos, soak it in. I was *possessed* to be there, and a lot of that intensity came out in Machine Head."

They've become such a permanent, unquestioned fixture in the metal world that it's easy to forget the monstrous impact of Machine Head's first album, *Burn My Eyes*. Released by Roadrunner Records on August 9, 1994, it was hailed as an instant classic and became the label's biggest-selling debut ever (an accolade it retained until Slipknot's breakthrough in '99). With its ground-breaking blend of thuggish grooves, vicious thrash and hip hop bravado, not to mention frontman Robb Flynn's incendiary lyrics, *Burn My Eyes* did more than most to redefine metal in the 90s. In fact, forging a new path for metal was precisely what Robb had in mind when he formed Machine Head as a side-project, while still a member of Bay Area thrashers Vio-lence.

"I love those guys and I loved all the music that we made together, but I was ready for something else in my life," Robb recalls today. "So I quit Vio-lence in '92. Right around that time, Ministry needed a touring guitar player. They were fucking *massive* at that point, it was the *Psalm 69* era. They wanted to hear some stuff and I don't know why, but I had some chip on my shoulder and didn't want to send them old music. I wanted to send them *new* music."

Robb had already written a handful of new songs, including *Death Church*, a slow-burning monster that was purposefully distinct from anything he'd written with Vio-lence or his other former band, Forbidden. With syncopated, grinding riffs redolent of Godflesh and Neurosis, and lyrics that went straight for religion's jugular, Machine Head already had a strong identity. Meanwhile, Robb needed help to record his audition for Ministry's touring guitarist role, so he enlisted drummer Chris Kontos, a veteran of the Bay Area hardcore scene with the likes of Attitude Adjustment and Grinch.

"One of Chris's bands had a rehearsal place in Oakland, three blocks from where the stabbing incident happened at the gas station [as documented in Machine Head's *Triple Beam*, from last year's *Catharsis* album]. So going into this neighbourhood, we were bringing guns, we had hoodies up, just trying to be super-incognito and it was *tense*! But we got in there and Chris had this high-tech boombox so we could record in stereo, and we just sat and jammed. It was exciting! As far as I was concerned, that was it. Chris was in bands that were doing stuff… I was at ground zero… I'm hoping to tour with Ministry… so there was no talk of him joining the band."

As Robb notes with a wry smile, the call from Ministry never came. Instead, Robb powered ahead with his new band. Completed by bassist Adam Duce, guitarist Logan Mader and drummer Tony Costanza, with whom Robb wrote several songs that would end up on *Burn My Eyes*, the first Machine Head line-up set about establishing themselves as a ferocious new force in the Bay Area and beyond.

"Tony got us our first gig in Las Vegas, a club show," Robb recalls. "We went down to Vegas, played to 40 people and then got wasted! Ha ha! After that, we had a couple of things under our belts and right about that time Joey [Huston] became our manager and that's when things really started happening."

If Machine Head's demo hadn't been enough to convince Al Jourgensen, it certainly grabbed the attention of Roadrunner Records, who signed the band in 1993 before even having seen them play live. With the likes of Fear Factory, Sepultura, Obituary and Type O Negative on their books, Roadrunner were the perfect home for Robb's epoch-wrenching take on the metal blueprint: all the band needed was a debut album worthy of their burgeoning reputation. With Tony Costanza departing and Chris Kontos returning, this time on a permanent basis, Machine Head were ready to deliver the goods on tape. Recorded at Berkeley's Fantasy Studios, and produced by legendary metal guru Colin Richardson, *Burn My Eyes*' ultra-modern metal anthems perfectly encapsulated both Robb's intense focus *and* the self-inflicted chaos of the young band's lives.

Robb Flynn: Al Jourgensen's loss is very much our gain

GETTY

"WE HAD GUNS AND OUR HOODIES UP, TRYING TO BE SUPER-INCOGNITO"

Adam Duce gets wild

"It was a crazy, intense time. We'd go in and record every day," says Robb. "The guys were all smoking weed. I was sober because I was so fucking focused on getting shit right. But Chris tells this story about how we smoked so much weed that we set off the fire alarms and almost killed everybody with the Halon gas that was going to be released. It sucks all of the oxygen out! Ha ha!"

Twenty-five years on, few fans would dispute the enduring power of songs like *Davidian*, *Block* and *Blood For Blood*. With enough old-school bite to keep the thrash contingent happy and vast quantities of contemporary punch and invention, *Burn My Eyes* made a decent fist of uniting the tribes. The album's impact was immediate, particularly in the UK and Europe, but until those sales figures rolled in, Robb remained unsure whether the band had a bright future.

"We didn't think we were going to conquer the world," he shrugs. "We knew the shit we were playing was super-aggressive and was never going to fly on the radio. I wasn't sitting there thinking, 'Oh this is going to set the world on fire!' I just remember trying to make it as heavy, intense, pissed-off, experimental and wild as possible."

Was he conscious of his sound being genuinely new and groundbreaking? Machine Head got tagged with the Pantera/'groove metal' thing, but they never really sounded like that…

GETTY

"WE SMOKED SO MUCH WEED THAT WE SET OFF THE FIRE ALARMS AND NEARLY DIED"

"Yeah, that's something that got stuck with us because Pantera were popular at the time. Did we like Pantera? Of course. I'm not gonna say that they weren't an influence. When we were making *Burn My Eyes*, I was all about Dimebag's guitar tone, it was the sickest shit ever! But musically we were coming from a different place. We were coming from Metallica and Slayer, we were coming from Neurosis, we were coming from hardcore and rap. It was just this confluence of music and passion and drive, in a really intense time in our lives, and it became this crazy mishmash of music that really shouldn't have worked. No one realised it was possible. But we did it and it went on to change stuff. It's nuts."

If Machine Head's music was an unstoppable force, Robb Flynn's identity as a lyricist was established with similar vigour on *Burn My Eyes*.

Remorselessly furious but literate and inventive, he wrote about the bloody Waco Siege of 1993 in legendary opener *Davidian*. David Koresh, leader of religious cult the Branch Davidians, was holed up in his compound in Texas when a stand-off started between him and the government, who wanted to arrest him on charges of illegal firearms and explosives. Fifty-one days into the siege, he and almost 80 followers died in a fire following an FBI assault. The FBI maintain they did not start the fires.

Robb wrote about the riots in LA in 1992 in twisted interlude *Real Eyes, Realize, Real Lies* and album closer *Block*. Meanwhile, other songs took pointed jabs at religion and political corruption, while slow-burner *I'm Your God Now* tackled the horrors of drug addiction.

Twenty-five years later, it all seems disturbingly relevant to mankind's current state of disarray. When Robb expressed doubts about the lyrics to *Davidian* ('*Let freedom ring with a shotgun blast!*') after the mass shooting in Vegas in October 2017, it emphasised the edgy, subversive power that Machine Head were wielding back in those early days: this was music born of chaos and rage. No compromise, no fucks given.

"I feel proud of what I was able to say in those songs," Robb states. "I don't want to say it's *political*, but songs like *Davidian* and *Block* were documenting all the crazy shit that was going on. Until then, there was a lot of fantasy stuff in metal and I couldn't connect with it. Rap and punk rock were still about the streets and protest and *anger*. Anger, whether it was right or wrong, just spraying it *everywhere*, is definitely what was getting me off."

As it turned out, a lot of people shared Robb's proclivity for fury. Within a matter of months, Machine Head were being talked about as heavyweights, and following a major European tour as main support to Slayer, the band were soon back as headliners. The rest, as they say, is history – albeit history with a shitload of ups, downs and unexpected detours.

In 2019, Robb is a very different man from the incensed, snotty hooligan who bellowed those *Burn My Eyes* classics. But despite being older and wiser, there lingers a sense that if a riot breaks out any time soon, Robb will be on his bike and into the fray before you can say 'fuck it all'. This autumn, Oakland's premier riot-starters ride again.

"Think about what would've happened if I *had* got the Ministry gig," chuckles Robb. "Machine Head may never have fucking happened. Life is so crazy like that. *Burn My Eyes* could've been our only chance, so we had to come out swinging and swinging harder than any motherfucker out there."

As Korn dusted off their Adidas trackies for their 20th anniversary shows in 1994, Jonathan Davis and Munky revisited their self-titled debut. *Are you readyyyyy?*

WORDS: PAUL BRANNIGAN

Remember who they are

GETTY

There's a certain irony in the fact that rock critics were busy writing obituaries for Kurt Cobain as Korn arrived at Indigo Ranch studios to record their debut album. For in time, the music the Bakersfield, California, quintet recorded at the picturesque Malibu studio would kill off grunge just as emphatically as Nirvana's arrival in the mainstream signalled the death knell for 80s hair metal. Introduced by Jonathan Davis's electrifying call to arms, "Are you ready?", Korn's self-titled debut album is the sound of a musical revolution – a brutal, thrillingly invigorating re-imagining of metal for a new millennium, which has lost nothing of its power and impact two decades on. Forensically dissected, the source materials for its hybrid sound are easily discerned, with Korn owing a debt of thanks to Pantera, Rage Against The Machine, Faith No More and the woozy, noir atmospherics of West Coast hip-hop. But in collaboration with maverick producer Ross Robinson, Korn created a distinctive, innovative and unique new vocabulary for metal which would singularly redefine the musical landscape.

On its release in October 1994, *Metal Hammer* commented that "throughout the 12 tracks, there is a constant deep, dark groove with a hypnotic sense of melody".

As the band prepared to return to the UK in July 2015 for two special shows at which they will perform their eponymous debut collection in full, *Hammer* spoke to founding members Jonathan Davis (vocals) and Munky (guitar), about their memories of recording this metallic milestone.

"It was a bunch of kids from Bakersfield living out their rock'n'roll dreams," says Jonathan. "I remember it as a really cool experience."

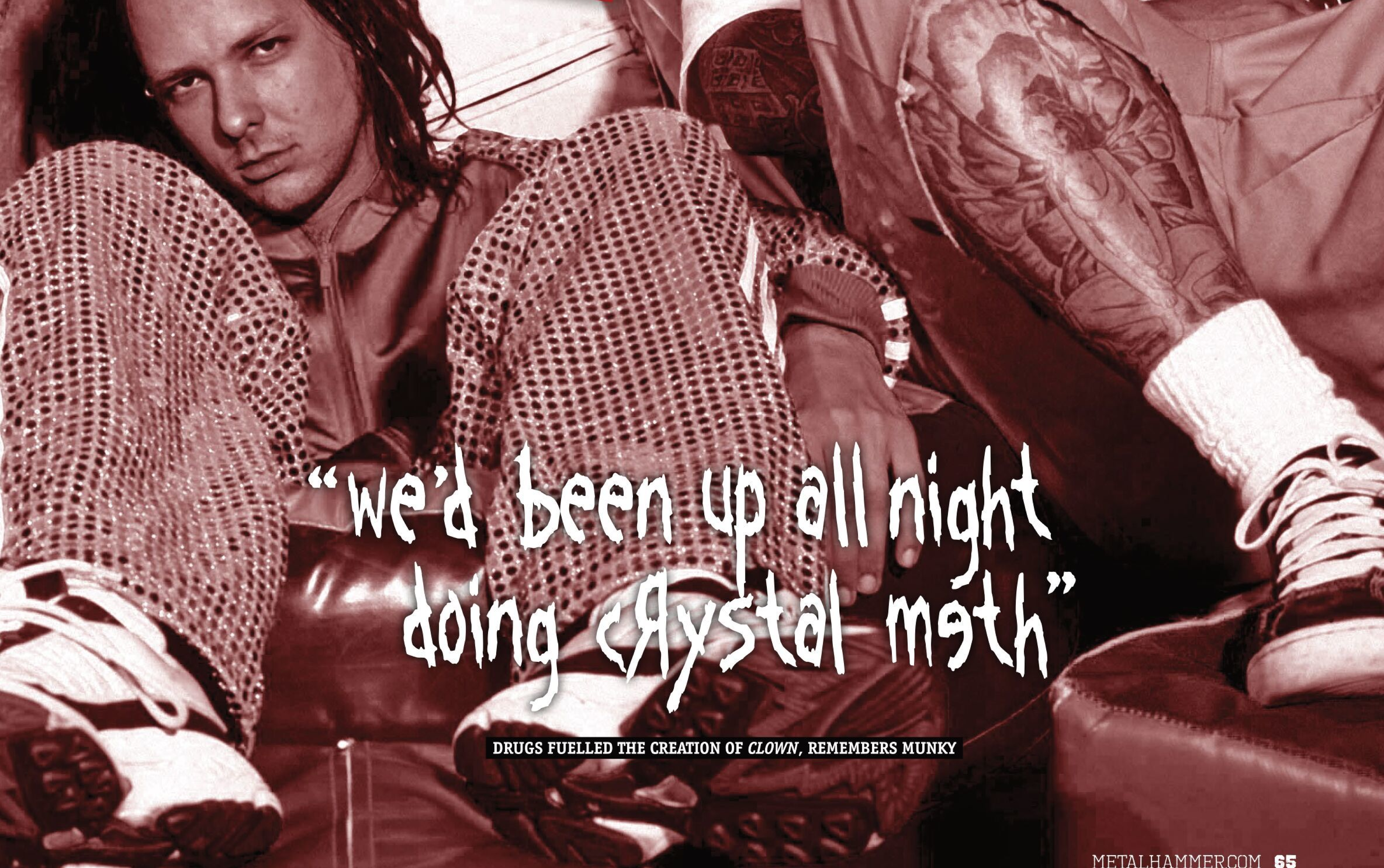
"If we'd known just how important the album would become, maybe we'd have tried to stay sober for some of it!" Munky adds with a laugh.

BLIND

THE BIRTH OF A LEGEND, AND ONE OF THE ALL-TIME CLASSIC ALBUM OPENERS

MUNKY: "The riff came from Jonathan's old band, SexArt. Head and I saw them play at some little club and I remember thinking the riff was pretty cool – it was in a different key, but still really heavy. It felt like new territory; like something I'd never heard before. I think it might have been Ross Robinson who suggested doing a version of it, so we rearranged it, and I remember the demo version of it being super heavy. We were like, 'Wow, this has to be on the album.'"

JONATHAN: "When my first band broke up, I asked my friend Ryan [Shuck], who went on to join Orgy, if I could keep the song. The way we did it was completely different to the original version anyway. What was I going for lyrically? I have no fucking idea, brother! This was just a



"we'd been up all night doing crystal meth"

DRUGS FUELLED THE CREATION OF *CLOWN*, REMEMBERS MUNKY

"sometimes people need to be told to fuck off!"

MUNKY RAILS AGAINST THE HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING DETAILED ON *FAGET*

stream-of-consciousness thing; it was all over the place. I think it's about being blind to your reality; blocking the shit out that you don't want to see or hear. Every single fucking time we start this up and see how the crowd reacts, it's incredible. Metalheads love this song."

BALL TONGUE

SCAT VOCALS, HIP-HOP BEATS, DISSONANT SEVEN-STRING GUITARS… THE SOUND OF THE FUTURE. JONATHAN RECORDED THE VOCALS AT HIS FATHER'S FAT TRACKS STUDIO WHILE HIGH ON CRYSTAL METH

JONATHAN: "When we moved to Huntington Beach, we rehearsed in Anaheim, at a place called Underground Chicken Sound. The owner then started managing us. We were all doing lots of speed at the time, but when he was tweaking he'd get cramp or something, and his tongue would ball up in his mouth. We'd be like, 'Uh-oh, he's getting ball tongue…'

MUNKY: "His tongue would freeze up and he couldn't talk. He'd be going, [unintelligible gurgling noise] 'Guuurrggghhh, gahhh!' Odd then, but funny now! This has got a great 'hit you over the head' riff: it was one of the first songs where Head [guitars] and I developed call-and-answer guitar parts and it worked out cool."

JONATHAN: "When we got signed and went on to get real management, Ball Tongue took it hard, and I felt bad because he was like a brother to me, but we had to cut our links. This was a kind of salute to those early crazy days."

NEED TO

'I HATE YOU (WHY ARE YOU TAKEN?)' SINGS AN ANGUISHED JD ON THIS BITING TALE OF UNREQUITED LOVE

MUNKY: "I remember Fieldy [bass] and David [Silveria, original drummer] working on this groove in the rehearsal room, and it was really cool and funky, and Head and I wanted to put some dissonant, diminished chords around it. There's always something really exciting about building songs from the ground up, and this one came together brilliantly."

JONATHAN: "Do you remember the band Human Waste Project? Well, this song is about their singer, Aimee Echo. We were really good friends back in the day, and we never hooked up, and never did anything, but the vibe was there. I don't think I ever told her this, but I guess she's going to find out now…"

CLOWN

JONATHAN DAVIS ATTACKS SMALLTOWN INTOLERANCE AND PREJUDICE. THE VIDEO FOR THE SONG REVISITED HIS MEMORIES OF BEING BULLIED IN HIGH SCHOOL

MUNKY: "Head and I wrote the main riff for this in our neighbour's apartment in Huntington Beach when we were pretty high: we had been up all night doing crystal meth. I'm not sure that drugs opened our minds creatively, but they made us push our abilities to our limits, and pushed our boundaries in terms of making the sounds we heard it in our heads a reality."

JONATHAN: "I remember the show that inspired the lyrics. We were playing this club in San Diego, and this fucking old skinhead punk kept screaming, 'You're not from HB [Huntington Beach], you're from Bakersfield!' I was like, 'I don't give a fuck where we're from, bro.' Eventually he took a swing at me, and Ball Tongue jumped up and knocked him the fuck out; laid him out right there. They dragged him out of the club, and halfway through the set I could see him out back, jamming to the music. That tells you what kind of fucking clown he was."

DIVINE

A FILTHY, ROLLING RIFF ACCOMPANIES ONE OF JONATHAN DAVIS'S CREEPIEST LYRICS; A REVENGE FANTASY BORNE FROM OBSESSION

MUNKY: "This was one of the first songs we wrote at Underground Chicken Sound. I remember [future Metallica bassist] Robert Trujillo coming to the studio because we were considering having him produce our first record, and he said, 'Let's work on one song to see how we work together', so we picked this one. We didn't form a relationship with Robert to the point where he got to produce the album, but we liked the ideas that he had, and the song structure we created that day is the one that's on the album."

JONATHAN: "The song is about sadism and stalking. It's a really dark song about basically torturing this poor girl psychologically. I've been known to do that… I was definitely letting some demons out on this album."

FAGET

THE ALBUM'S FIRST TRULY JAW-DROPPING MOMENT, AS JONATHAN DAVIS LETS RIP AT THE HOMOPHOBIC BULLIES WHO MADE HIS ADOLESCENCE SO MISERABLE

MUNKY: "When people first heard this, they were like, 'Holy shit!' It's kinda like Rage Against The Machine on steroids. Sometimes people need to be told to fuck off."

JONATHAN: "Growing up, I was a new romantic. My favourite band was Duran Duran, so I'd wear make-up and long shirts, and in Bakersfield – an oil and farming town – there were a lot of macho jocks who took offence to that. I got my ass kicked and got called a 'faggot' all the time. I wasn't gay, but it got to the point where I thought that maybe I was gay, and just didn't know it. It really fucked with my head, and I had to get that shit off my chest. Still to this day, it feels so good to be able to scream it out. Bullying is not some rite of passage that people should accept, it's bullshit, and I hope this song has helped people. Every time I sing this I relive that shit. It's my therapy, I guess."

SHOOTS AND LADDERS

BAGPIPES, NURSERY RHYMES, ATONAL RIFFS… NO OTHER BAND ON THE PLANET SOUNDED LIKE THIS IN 1994

MUNKY: "Jonathan is an amazing bagpipes player, and the first time we heard him play we were like, 'Holy shit, we have to put this on the record!' We knew AC/DC did it, so we tried to figure out the tuning and mould the riff around it. This song, for me, fed into the idea of the album cover: it's this playful nursery rhyme, but you know there's something dark and mysterious behind it, and you can kinda sense the monster emerging in the middle of it…"

JONATHAN: "I guess I was in a twisted state of mind when I wrote this, thinking about hidden evils and the corrupted innocence of childhood, and the dark meanings behind some of the nursery rhymes we all grow up with. I mean, *Ring A Ring O' Roses* is about the Black Plague, which is kinda fucked up. Now I get to see big, buff, macho men sing nursery rhymes at rock shows, which is kinda fucked up, too!"

PREDICTABLE

ONE OF THE ALBUM'S HEAVIEST TRACKS SONICALLY, WITH AN APPROPRIATELY DOWNBEAT, DEAD-INSIDE JD LYRIC

MUNKY: "This is one of the more metal songs on the album; the riff kinda reminds me of Pantera meets Alice In Chains. I remember thinking it was cool that it started with this simple figure played on one string through a clean channel, and then the riff comes in and hits you over the head. It's a great song, but not one of my favourites on the album."

JONATHAN: "This is just a song about being bored with life, about being down in the dumps and thinking life sucks. This whole record is super dark, and comes from a dark place. Making it was fun, but it stirred up some dark shit, and

Korn today (left to right): JD, Fieldy, Munky, Head, Ray Luzier

PRESS

going back to songs like this for the 20th anniversary shows is a real reminder of those times."

FAKE

ONE OF THE ALBUM'S LESS CELEBRATED TRACKS, PARTIALLY INSPIRED BY THE BULLYING JONATHAN USED TO SUFFER AT THE HANDS OF FIELDY

JONATHAN: "That's about fake people… in part about some of the shit I had from Fieldy back in the day. There are still plenty of fake people out there, particularly in this business, but now I don't really give a fuck – I stay well away from them, and they're not in my life. But when you're a kid, 23 years old, it's harder to deal with, and harder to understand why people do what they do."

MUNKY: "I remember we wrote this song in San Diego, on a boat. We had a gig in San Diego and my dad had a small houseboat in a slip near there, so he said we could stay on it, so, of course, we partied all night. But we came up with most of the riffs that night. It's one of my favourite songs, because it has so many parts but they all make sense when played properly."

LIES

MORE SOUL-BARING SELF-FLAGELLATION FROM JONATHAN, ON ONE OF THE ALBUM'S MORE LOW-KEY MOMENTS

MUNKY: "I always loved how Fieldy and David would think left whenever they heard stuff that Head and I were writing, and when we were working on this they said, 'Let's do something that when you turn up your car stereo, the fucking licence plate is going to rattle.' They wanted almost like a hip-hop beat, and I loved what they came up with. We didn't always know what we were doing on this record, and I think that's the beauty of it."

JONATHAN: "This is as much about me lying to myself about my problems as hearing lies from others. Looking back, I wasted so much time and energy not dealing with problems, but when you're young you don't always have the confidence to address shit in your life."

HELMET IN THE BUSH

TWISTED INDUSTRIAL DARKNESS, INSPIRED BY DRUG-FUELLED ANXIETY

MUNKY: "This was written towards the end of the studio session, on a little drum machine. It was mainly Jonathan, Head and Ross. I remember being gone from the studio for one day, and when I came back they said, 'Listen to this!' and they had this fucking killer track. I was blown away, and I was just like, 'Let me put my shit on it, too!'"

JONATHAN: "This is about good old meth amphetamine – about doing so much speed that your dick is so small that it just looks like a helmet in the bush! I remember people fucking freaking out about us doing electronic shit on that song, but I think it's stood the test of time. After we did this record I did crystal meth for about three more weeks and then I quit, and never did it again: I thought to myself, 'I have a drug problem, and if I don't stop it's going to kill me.'"

DADDY

THE ALBUM'S MOST HARROWING, RAW AND DISTURBING SONG, CLOSING THE ALBUM WITH THE SOUND OF JONATHAN DAVIS SOBBING UNCONTROLLABLY IN INDIGO RANCH'S VOCAL RECORDING BOOTH

JONATHAN: "That song is fucked up. It's about abuse, obviously. Not from my parents, but from a babysitter, and unfortunately the scars still remained. That song needed to be done."

MUNKY: "We knew what this song was about, and we wanted to create a spooky, heavy foundation for Jonathan so that he could open those doors. When we were tracking the song, Jonathan really took the memory and relived it, and I remember Ross telling us to just keep playing when he broke down, so we were totally improvising for the last couple of minutes. I remember worrying that the tape would run out, and it did, literally 30 seconds after the end of the song. It's a scary song."

JONATHAN: "In the studio I was properly freaking out and bawling, and I had no idea Ross Robinson was getting it all on tape until I came back a couple of days later and he said, 'Listen to this…' I couldn't even listen to it. I listened to it to learn the words for this tour, and even now it's still raw. It caused a lot of pain in my life, but it's worth it if it gave other people some strength and helped them to deal with the same sort of shit. I think the family we have, helping and caring about one another, is magical, and that's why I still do what I do. The money and the big house is cool, but the real pay-off now is making people happy. I know that sounds cheesy and not very rock'n'roll, but I don't give a fuck. I'm old now and I can say what I feel." ✠

NU METAL

The 90s were responsible for some of freakiest sights and sounds in metal history. Limp Bizkit frontman Fred Durst and Coal Chamber singer Dez Fafara guide us through the decadent years of nu metal.

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

On October 27, 1995, a rising band from Bakersfield, California, played their first British gig at London's LA2 club. Their self-titled debut album had caused a minor stir among the country's more clued-up rock fans, 800 of whom were here tonight.

Their name was Korn, and if they weren't an entirely unknown quantity, then they certainly counted as dark horses. Especially singer Jonathan Davis, a former mortuary assistant, who whispered, gibbered and shrieked his way through a set of songs about insecurity, twisted sexuality and child abuse.

Korn sounded like nothing else. They took the rap-metal of Faith No More, Rage Against The Machine and the Red Hot Chili Peppers and twisted it into unrecognisable shapes. Guitars were downtuned, lyrics were several shades of nasty and they even busted out a set of bagpipes. It was the sound of tomorrow.

Within a couple of years, the scene they spearheaded would be the biggest noise in rock. The bands who came in their wake were an unholy collection of misfits, weirdos and dead animal-huffing madmen. This movement would soon be branded nu metal. But really, it was the sound of the lunatics taking over the asylum.

Los Angeles was dead in the early 90s. Hair metal was gasping its last, Aquanet-choked breath, and the snooty grunge hipsters who had stepped into the breach wouldn't be seen dead on the Sunset Strip. Instead it was left to a bunch of unknown local bands to build something from the ground up.

One of these bands was Coal Chamber, whose singer Dez Fafara loved punk and 80s synth-pop. When Coal Chamber started in 1994, they played standard-issue alt-rock. It was only when they decided to downtune their guitars that they noticed other bands doing a similar thing.

Korn's Jonathan Davis: one of the founding fathers of nu metal.

GETTY X2

"In '92 or '93, the clubs weren't happening, nobody was playing them," says Dez. "But then you started seeing Coal Chamber, Deftones, System Of A Down creeping into these places. Korn would bring busloads of people up from Orange County. Everybody had to sound different and look different to stand out. We went from wearing Dickies and having our hair braided to getting way more in touch with our goth side. That's why we dressed so crazy."

At the same time, something was stirring down in the swamps of Florida. Fronted by sometime tattoo artist Fred Durst, Limp Bizkit were creating waves in Jacksonville. More explicitly indebted to hip hop than most of the bands in California, their singer nevertheless wore his outsider status on his sleeve.

"We were the black sheep – or the white sheep," says Fred. "Not quite hip hop, not quite metal. But we didn't give a fuck, and we always tried to say that fairly blatantly. That was one of the things that became dislikable about us."

Limp Bizkit may have been based 3,000 miles from Los Angeles, but they became honorary members of this new fraternity of misfits after Fred pressed his band's demo into Korn's hand when they played Jacksonville.

They jumped on board at the right time. The scene was gaining traction: Korn released their debut album in October 1994; Deftones' debut, *Adrenaline*, followed a year later. The scene gained further momentum when Sepultura released their visionary *Roots* album in early 1996: the track *Cutaway* featured Korn's Jonathan Davis and DJ Lethal of the then-unknown Limp Bizkit alongside the unwitting scene godfather, Mike Patton of Faith No More.

By the time Limp Bizkit released their own debut album, *Three Dollar Bill Y'All$*, in 1997, things were speeding so fast that it was all Fred

"I GOT TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE BULLIES. IRONICALLY, THEY STARTED TO LIKE THE MUSIC"

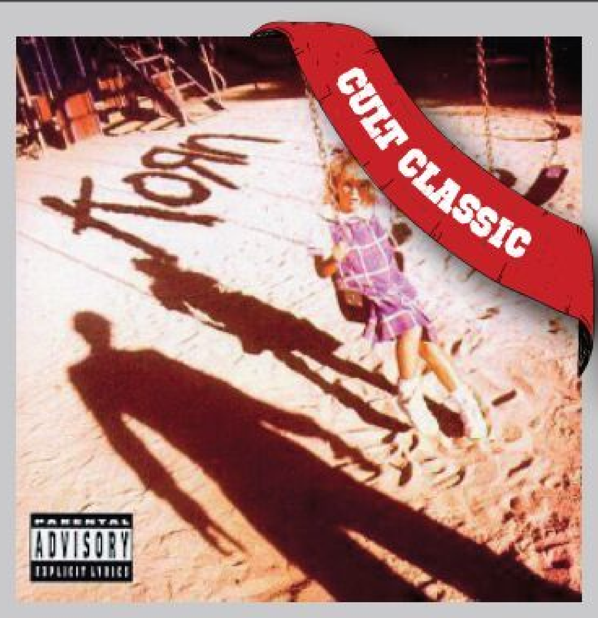
FRED DURST ON THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SUCCESS

Coal Chamber. Devildriver's Dez Fafara (top left) is hardly recognisable!

ESSENTIAL LISTENING

THE ALBUMS EVERY METALHEAD SHOULD OWN

KORN
KORN 1994, EPIC



Korn's debut was, and is, the lodestone of nu metal . It had traces of Faith No More and Rage Against The Machine in its DNA, but those bands' music was as dark as One Direction compared to the burnt offerings presented by Jonathan Davis. Whether he's wheedling and screeching his way through the haunting *Daddy* or cranking up the bagpipes for the otherworldly *Shoots & Ladders*, this was music made without a blueprint. Wholly visionary and utterly startling, it still sounds like the start of a revolution.

LIMP BIZKIT
SIGNIFICANT OTHER 1999, FLIP/INTERSCOPE

Subsequent events sullied their reputation, but at this point, Bizkit were still untouchable. Their second album crackled with energy and invention, the likes of *Nookie* and *Re-Arranged* found Fred playing the role of dumb jock to perfection, while the Method Man-assisted *N 2 Gether Now* gave them hip hop credibility. But beneath the braggadocio were real emotions: anger, fear, humour and insecurity. The perfect balance wouldn't last long; their next album featured all the showboating but none of the wit.

SLIPKNOT
SLIPKNOT 1999, ROADRUNNER

Just when you thought it was safe to go into the water, this 18-legged, mask-wearing, dead crow-huffing monster churns into view. *Slipknot* wasn't their debut – they put out a self-funded affair with a different singer in the mid-90s – but it nevertheless applied a 10,000 watt jolt to the nu metal scene and beyond. This was a truly toxic miasma of hatred, alienation and fist-to-the-face craziness, fuelled by the sort of small-town frustration that comes from living in America's least-glamorous city. The bone-rattling likes of *Wait And Bleed* and *Spit It Out* were smart and heavy enough to bust Slipknot out of the confines of the scene: this was nu metal for people who didn't like nu metal.

Limp Bizkt: nu metal heroes… or villains?

"THERE WERE 15 GIRLS BENT OVER WITH STRAWBERRIES UP THEIR BUTTS"

FRED DURST LOOKS BACK ON HIS WILD WAYS

could do to hold on to his red baseball cap.

"It just happened," he says. "We didn't have time to pay attention. I was literally bullshitting anything to keep the band going. We were laughing every day at the fact that it even existed in the first place."

Fred might have quickly presented himself as nu metal's jock-in-chief, but he insists that underneath the potty-mouthed braggart in the baseball cap was a shy, insecure man still bearing the scars of childhood bullying. His band's success was a massive "fuck you" to all those people who had made his life hell.

"They'd ruined my life, and I thought they'd ruined our fans' lives as well," he says. "I really thought that people were identifying where I was coming from – a guy who finally got to stand up and fight back. The irony was that the bullies themselves started to like the music."

This outsidership – personal and musical – bred a camaraderie between the bands.

"Every time Coal Chamber played, I'd call System to open for us," says Dez. "In the early days, before they became popular, Limp Bizkit would stop by and say hi. When Coal Chamber did our first record, Fieldy loaned [original Coal Chamber bassist] Rayna his gear."

Nowhere was that gang mentality stonger than on the Ozzfest. Founded in 1996 as a two-day festival held in different cities, by the following year it had become a hugely successful travelling circus, and a lightning rod for freaks and weirdos onstage and off.

"Ozzfest was incredible," says Dez. "It was the first time the US had ever seen anything like it. Those kids who went to school dressed like the bands they were into and got shit for it, they were the ones coming to see us," says Dez. "They wanted to feel like they had something of their own. To feel like they belonged to something more powerful than themselves."

Ozzfest's success spawned a rash of copycat events, most notably Korn's Family Values extravaganza, which kicked off in 1998. Limp Bizkit played both events, and played a key role in the burgeoning hedonism that marked the start of nu metal's imperial phase.

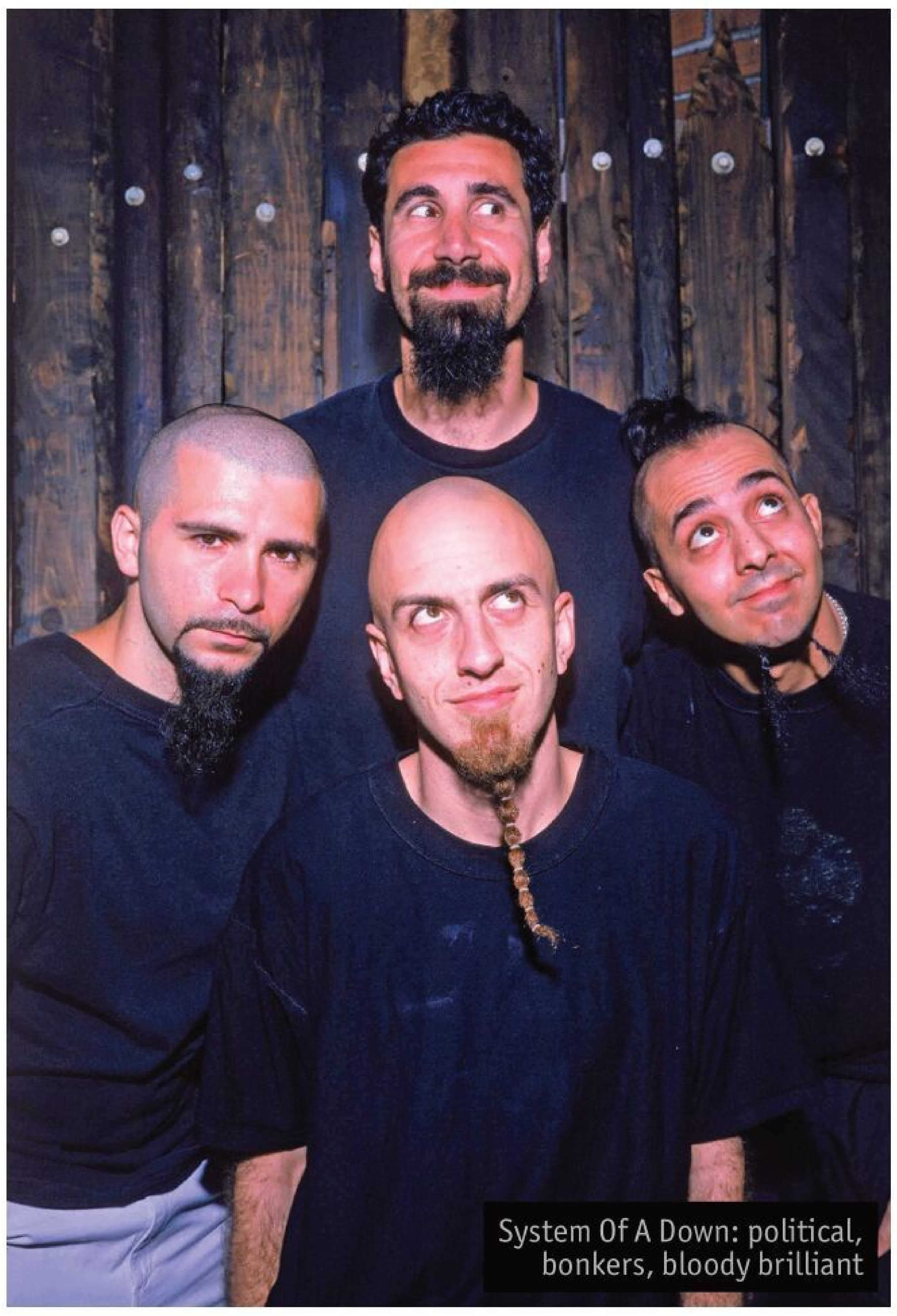
"I'm a guy who couldn't shake a stick at pretty girls and get them to date me," says Fred. "I went from that to roomfuls of people who'd do anything for me. I definitely enjoyed myself as much as I could. One time there were, like, 15 girls bent over and there was this other girl putting strawberries in their butts. We were all like, 'What the fuck's going on? This shit doesn't happen outside of Mötley Crüe videos!'"

In the wake of Ozzfest and Family Values, the floodgates broke. Nu metal became a truly mainstream proposition. Korn's *Follow The Leader* and Limp Bizkit's *Significant Other* were huge global hits, paving the way for a new wave of bands to ride their coat-tails. There was Static-X, whose singer sported a hairstyle that resembled a bizarre electrical accident; Orgy, a bunch of eyeliner-sporting hair metal refugees who came on like Duran Duran in leather onesies, plus Snot, Human Waste Project, Videodrone, Adema and countless other long-forgotten outfits, all with their own 'crazy' shtick, all cranking the dial up to 'weirdo'.

Most unhinged of all were a nine-piece from the backwaters of the Midwest who wore boilersuits and horror masks, and huffed the corpses of dead birds before they went onstage. Slipknot were a

The 18-legged, dead crow-huffing monster that is Slipknot.

GETTY X3


System Of A Down: political, bonkers, bloody brilliant

truly incredible experience on every level, and they would eventually keep the freak flag flying almost single-handedly throughout the 00s. But even as they were making a name for themselves, the more astute onlookers were starting to notice the writing on the wall.

"It was definitely starting to play itself out," says Dez. "There was a certain band – I won't say which one – who put out a record, and when I heard it, I went, 'This is it – the scene is dead.'"

In 2000, Linkin Park released their debut album, *Hybrid Theory*. It was an instant success, selling five million copies in 12 months (sales eventually exceeded 10 million). The band sounded nu metal but looked like a boy band. They didn't swear, didn't drink and they certainly didn't shove strawberries up anybody's arse. They drove a stake through the heart of the scene that spawned them.

It raised expectations to unrealistic levels. A band like Coal Chamber, who looked and sounded like an explosion in a nail factory, stood no chance in this new, hyper-commercial climate.

It didn't help that the personal and chemical excesses of the past few years were starting to take their toll. Members of Korn and Deftones struggled with drug addiction, as did three-quarters of Coal Chamber, who split up following their third album. "The drugs and the money bullshit was tearing us apart," says Dez.

Limp Bizkit were having their own problems. Their third album, the none-too-subtly titled *Chocolate Starfish And The Hotdog Flavored Water*, had been a huge mainstream hit in 2000. But for everyone who loved them, there were 10 who loathed them – and especially loathed Fred. One of them happened to be their own guitarist, Wes Borland, who quit in 2001, partly out of embarrassment at what the band had become.

"There was a monster living out there, and he had a red cap on," admits Fred now. "I was thinking, 'That guy? Who the fuck is he.' It was like Tyler Durden from *Fight Club*."

It was Bizkit's disastrous 2003 album, *Results May Vary*, that banged in the final nail. It single-handedly knocked the bottom out of what was left of the scene. "We went underground," says Fred simply, though you could argue that the decision had been taken out of their hands.

Over the next few years, nu metal became a dirty word. Some bands ploughed on (Korn, Limp Bizkit), some wisely ducked out (System Of A Down), some reinvented themselves as straightahead rock'n'roll bands (latecomers-to-the-party Papa Roach). Some, such as Slipknot, even remained on an upward trajectory, though they were firmly in the minority.

But then a strange thing happened. The passage of time and a lack of a decent scene for misfits to latch onto conspired to create a nostalgia for nu metal. For proof, take a look at the lineup for this year's Download festival: Korn, Slipknot, Limp Bizkit and Coal Chamber will all be making an appearance. Nu metal has become classic rock. The rehabilitation of the league of freaks is already underway.

"I look back on it and I see how significant it is," says Dez, who reformed Coal Chamber in 2011. "The biggest bands on the planet right now are from that scene – Slipknot, Korn, System Of A Down. The reason is that it was so different. The music, the look, the people. There was something in that scene that was real to the core. We were proud to be part of it."

Now, the lunatics are back. The asylum is theirs for the taking once more. ✠

THE FACTS

2001's best-selling album worldwide was the Linkin Park debut *Hybrid Theory*. Bye bye, nu metal…

7 million is the number of copies sold of *Significant Other*. No surprise with singles like *Nookie* and *Break Stuff*

31 was Dez Fafara's age when Coal Chamber released their debut, eponymous album in 1997

$6.4 million is the amount grossed by the first Family Values Tour in '98

$500,000 was the size of the advance Slipknot received for signing to Roadrunner

98 is the combined Scrabble score for the names of all four members of System Of A Down

THE FINAL WORD

OUR HEROES AS RATED BY THEIR PEERS

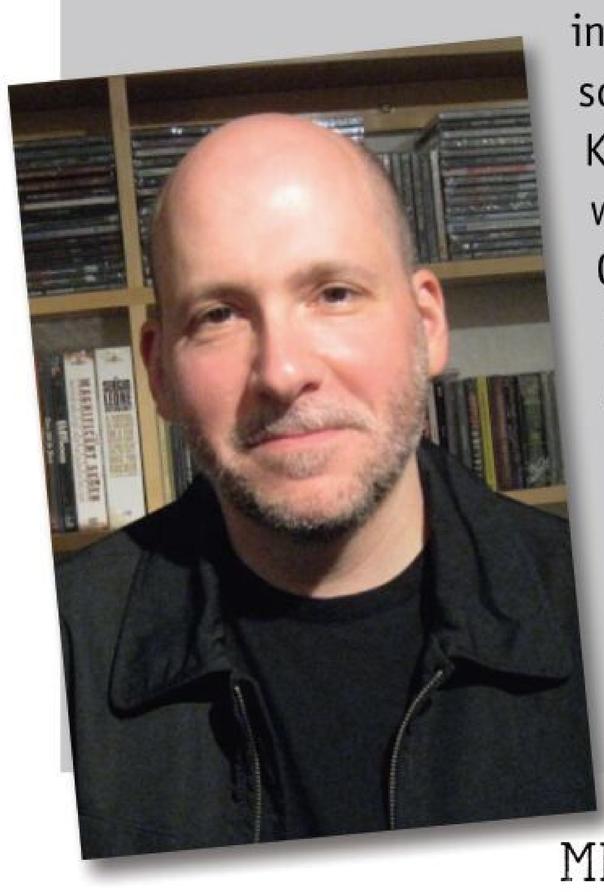
MONTE CONNER

PRESIDENT • NUCLEAR BLAST

"For me, nu metal's defining characteristic would be its thick, downtuned guitars and simple groove-based riffs with many bands incorporating rap-style vocals with a hip hop mentality and fashion sense. There was an honesty and emotion in the vocal performances and lyrics that had rarely been heard before. Everything I just described can be found on the 1994 debut by Korn, the revolutionary band who completely invented the entire genre.

Max Cavalera of Sepultura was very influenced by that Korn debut and led Sepultura in a nu metal direction on their 1996 *Roots* album. It was quite a controversial move at the time and it initially alienated many of Sepultura's diehard fans, but over time, *Roots* went on to be a huge success and became a career-defining moment.

The nu metal sound still lives on today, influencing new bands like Five Finger Death Punch. Like with any innovators connected to a scene, pioneers such as Korn, Deftones (who weren't strictly nu metal), Coal Chamber, Slipknot, Disturbed and System Of A Down have all transcended genre categorisation at this stage, and are simply known these days as great metal bands."



IN THE BEGINNING

As a reunified Germany came to terms with its new identity, six musicians from the East Side were discovering their own. This is the story behind the remarkable birth of Rammstein.

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

Flake Lorenz can remember exactly where he was when the Berlin Wall came down. It was November 9, 1989, and his punk band, Feeling B, were playing a show in West Berlin. Nothing unusual there, except for the fact that the future Rammstein keyboard player and his bandmates were natives of East Berlin – a city that had been physically, politically and ideologically separated from its western twin for decades.

Feeling B had been allowed through the concrete barrier that split the city to play a gig as part of a government drive to show the decadent, capitalist West that the hardline socialist East wasn't the monster on the doorstep it was frequently painted as. As the band played, Flake spotted some familiar faces in the audience – faces from East Berlin that shouldn't have been there.

"We noticed our friends had come in," Flake tells *Metal Hammer* today. "I said, 'How can it be that they got to West Berlin? It's not possible. Did they have to jump the Wall?'"

Someone informed him that the Wall had fallen that very night, smashed by protesters nearly 30 years after it had been erected. It was a momentous occasion, albeit one that prevented Feeling B from getting home. "It was not possible," he says. "The holes in the wall were closed with people. It was so busy we couldn't get back. We had to stay the night in West Berlin."

On a global scale, the fall of the Berlin Wall was the most momentous event since the end of the Second World War. It sparked off the reunification of Germany and set in motion a chain of events that would end in the dismantling of the USSR and the end of the Cold War.

But for Flake and Feeling B, it had a more detrimental effect. "It changed so many things," he says. "Nobody in East Germany wanted to listen to East German bands, because now they could listen to the real thing. Everything was possible now, where it had been forbidden in the past. And so everybody tried to make new things."

MAIN IMAGE: PRESS/ JOACHIM GERN
ADDITIONAL REPORTING, CLAWFINGER AND FARMER BOYS: MALCOLM DOME

Flake would become one of those people. Just a few years later, he and two of his Feeling B bandmates, guitarist Paul Landers and drummer Christoph Schneider, would co-found a new band whose provocative sound and warped, sardonic worldview was simultaneously linked to the nation's divided past and symbolic of its bright, united future. Their name was Rammstein, and they would go on to become the biggest, boldest and most controversial German band of the last 25 years.

Never, ever ask Till Lindemann if he's got a light

Like Flake, Rammstein guitarist Richard Z. Kruspe grew up in what was East Germany. But where Flake says that he loved life under the socialist government – "Life was free of trouble and pressure, we all had enough money to live," – Richard had a more complicated relationship with his native country.

"The thing about East Germany is that it was great to grow up there, until you were 12," he told *Hammer* in 2014. He had moved from his hometown of Schwerin to East Berlin in his late teens. "You were presented with the illusion of a very healthy society, which worked unless you asked questions – and you don't ask questions until you're 12."

Both men agree that there was a thriving underground music scene in the capital. The authoritarian East German government forced bands to apply for a licence to make music, a process that involved playing in front of a commission of eight or 10 suited people. An arty, livewire band like Feeling B could fudge the audition by changing their lyrics and toning down some of their more energetic songs. Few acts were turned down.

"There were a lot of bands, and we were all friends with each other," remembers Flake. "We played with each other. If we needed a guitar player, we took them from another band."

"There was new band every day," says Richard, whose pre-Rammstein bands included Das Elegante Chaos and Orgasm Death Gimmick. "There was a scene here where everyone was making music with other people. I loved that idea. So much excitement, so much music going on."

"AT THE START WE JUST WENT ONSTAGE IN OUR STREET CLOTHES OR UNDERWEAR"

FLAKE LORENZ

All that changed drastically after the Wall came down. While western music had previously been easily accessible on the radio (Flake: "It was the only thing that East Germany was not behind the West in"), the appetite for it suddenly exploded – and now it was readily available to gorge on.

"When the Wall finally fell in 1989, it was the beginning of a new era for all of us," says documentary maker Carl G. Hardt, who first met Feeling B in the mid-80s (see Made In Berlin, p.45). "But we quickly realised that no one in the West was waiting for us. The structure of the East German music industry collapsed completely. There was hardly any demand for East German bands; western bands dominated all the opportunities to perform. The eastern bands whose music had helped bring about the collapse of the system were now forced to reposition and reinvent themselves in order to gain a foothold in this new, thoroughly commercialised music business."

Feeling B managed to get with the programme. The band released two post-reunification albums, 1991's *Wir kriegen euch alle* and 1993's *Die Maske des roten Todes*, both of which Flake says were more successful than the one they released before the Wall came down.

But at the same time, Flake, Paul and Christoph had begun jamming with a trio of other East German musicians: Richard Kruspe, bassist Oliver Riedel and drummer-turned-singer Till Lindemann. And soon, this half-serious side-project would overshadow everything else.

Flake first met Till at a gig near his future bandmate's home in East Germany. Feeling B would often ask if anyone in the audience could put them up for the night. One night, Till was in the crowd. When the shout out for five beds or even a floor came, he offered them space at his house.

"We stayed and had parties there," says Flake. "And from time to time we came back to visit him, and so we became friends."

Till was a former swimming prodigy turned musician. When he met Feeling B, he was playing in the Schwerin-based art-punk band First Arsch. He was soon invited along to the extra-curricular jam sessions that would eventually sow the seeds for Rammstein.

"We met without aim, without a plan, just to play for two hours," recalls Flake. "It wasn't a band, it was a meeting point for us, just to do something different from our real bands. It was like a therapy group."

One of the first songs this un-named collective wrote was named after the town of Ramstein, scene of a 1988 airshow disaster in which 70 people died after two planes collided in mid-air. As word got around about this side-project, they became know as the band with the 'Ramstein song'. "Later people would say, 'This is the Ramstein band', and later it became 'This is Ramstein'," They soon adopted it as their name, adding an extra 'm'. 'Ramm' translates into English as 'ram', as in 'battering ram', while 'stein' means 'stone'. Ram-stone: a name that suited their sound perfectly.

For nearly a year and a half, Rammstein existed alongside the members' regular bands. Sometimes they would play on the same bill as Feeling B, taking the money they earned from the latter and investing it back into their new project. Flake finds it difficult to pinpoint exactly when Rammstein became their main focus.

"It wasn't a point, it was a feeling," he says now. "We played a lot of shows, and we felt that the people were fascinated. And we were fascinated ourselves. We felt it could be great."

PRESS

Many of those early shows took place in small towns in the old East Germany, where Feeling B were still popular. The legendary Rammstein live show was still a few years off, however. "At the start we just went onstage in our street clothes, in our underwear," says Flake. There were early attempts at pyrotechnic displays, using fireworks they'd bought for New Year's Eve parties and stockpiled. Recalls Flake: "One time we took them to the show, and thought, 'This is great!' And so we did a little bit more."

East German crowds knew the members from their previous bands, and loved them. West German crowds had no idea who they were, and many early gigs in the newly accessible western half of the country were sparsely populated. "Nobody came to our shows," says Flake bluntly of their appeal in the west.

The band's connection with their former home country ran deeper than just crowd numbers. Till elected to sing in his native tongue from the start. This was partly down to the fact that they had all been taught Russian rather than English at school. "I saw a lot of East German bands that sung in very bad English to people who didn't understand English – it was absolutely stupid," says Flake. "But if you really want to tell your emotions, you have to speak in your mother tongue. It's not possible to tell your emotions in another language."

Squat culture had blossomed in post-reunification Berlin. Taking the lead of Feeling B singer Aljoscha, bands and artists would take over empty buildings and warehouses, semi-legally or illegally. One of these buildings was a set of apartments in the city's Prenzlauer Berg district, which became home to Aljoscha's new political movement, Die Wydoks, as well as a film studio and a pirate radio station. It was in this building, too, that Rammstein recorded their first songs, inspired by the change in the air and the hangovers of the recent past.

Rammstein's approach may have been radical, but their journey was surprisingly conventional. The band entered a demo tape into a competition in which the first prize was studio time. Remarkably, they won, and used their prize to record a set of demos, which in turn attracted the attention of German label Motor Music, who offered them a deal. Before they could get in the studio, there was one hurdle to overcome.

"The record company told us we had to choose a producer," says Flake. "We didn't know what a producer was, because we didn't have them in East Germany. Nobody needed a producer for anything."

The band were instructed to hit the shops and write down the names of the producers on the back of their favourite CDs. When they returned and told the label they wanted to work with Bob Rock and Rick Rubin, they were politely told to scale back their ambitions.

The man who ended up overseeing *Herzeleid* was Swedish producer Jacob Hellner, best known for his work with 90s rap-metal middleweights Clawfinger. He liked the demo tracks he had been sent, though it was seeing the band live that convinced him.

"...it's the dogs. They take it too far, right?"

PRESS/F.L. LANGE

"IF YOU WANT TO TELL YOUR EMOTIONS, YOU HAVE TO SPEAK IN YOUR MOTHER TONGUE"
FLAKE LORENZ

American Horror Story season 23

His only stipulation was that the band come to him to record. They reluctantly agreed, decamping to Stockholm's Polar Studios, before moving to Jacob's own recording space.

Things didn't get off to the most auspicious start. The studio was cramped and it was hard for Richard to get the guitar sound he wanted. Factor in a problematic cultural gulf, and Rammstein were unhappy.

"The way Jacob worked was almost office hours," says Richard. "So we'd be left on our own during the evenings and at weekends. We didn't speak Swedish, or much English, and felt very alienated. We couldn't go anywhere, nor do anything, so our mood wasn't the best."

Things were particularly complicated by the fact that the producer only spoke English and Swedish while the band only spoke German and Russian. The communication issues became more apparent as work progressed. The band were unhappy with how Jacob was making their music sound, a problem neither party could resolve due to linguistic barriers. Jacob hit on a solution: he suggested bringing in an outsider who spoke both languages. The man he called in to save the album was Dutch engineer Ronald Prent.

"'Save' is a big word," Ronald tells *Hammer*. "It wasn't lost, but it wasn't where they wanted it to be. We met and went through the music. I tried to get into the guys' heads, and into Jacob Hellner's head, to understand what they were looking for."

Nailing that first song was a long and sometimes fraught process. Rammstein worked as a democracy – all decisions, from where the band ate to what the songs sounded like, had to be agreed on by all six members.

"They let us do what we did," says Ronald, who worked in tandem with Jacob, "and when we thought we had a version of it, we'd go, 'This could be cool' and get the band in. They would listen to it and then they would have what we later called their famous German Conference – where they went outside into a room, a living area at the studio. They would sometimes talk for 10 minutes, sometimes for two hours, until they formed their opinion. Then they'd come back and say, 'It sounds really great, but that's not Rammstein – can you do something else?'"

They tried multiple mixes, altering levels, shaping guitars, raising and lowering the volume of the vocals. There were moments of comedy.

"THEY SAID TO MIX THE TRACK LIKE BON JOVI. THEY WERE SERIOUS"

RONALD PRENT, MIXING/MASTERING

"At one point, somebody said, 'You know what, maybe we should sound like Bon Jovi. Can you do that?' And I said, 'Sure.' It was dead serious. So we mixed the track like Bon Jovi, and got really close to it. They'd come in and listen to it and say, 'Man, that's amazing, we really sound like Bon Jovi, but that's not us.'"

Richard later said that the process caused tensions between the band and Ronald, but the latter has a different view of it. "Sometimes being in the studio is like a little community where you're locked up with each other for 12 hours a day," he says now. "You work your ass off, and they come in and go, 'Yeah, that's great, but that's not us.' You get desperate. I might have said, 'Maybe you want to think about this a bit more, maybe you want to give it another chance before you dismiss it' – stuff like that."

According to Ronald, getting the first song right took seven days. But once that was locked in, it was smoother sailing. Any friction was clearly forgotten by the time the album was done – the band asked him to come back and work on their second album, *Sehnsucht*.

"I created the Rammstein sound on the first two albums," says Ronald today. "I find it difficult to say, but that's my credit."

Rammstein's debut album was released in Germany on September 25, 1995. Its title, *Herzeleid*, roughly translated to 'Heartbroken' in English – a reference to the romantic problems more than one bandmember was going through while they were writing it.

"I was breaking up with my girlfriend and it was very tough," recalls Richard. "I'd never experienced anything so emotionally hard before. It left me drained. Unless you've been through something similar, then you can't get to grips with the way I felt. Till was going through something similar, and as he was a good friend I stayed with him for a few months. I suppose we helped each other out. In fact, the rest of what was to become Rammstein were also suffering personal problems of their own."

Their collective state of mind wasn't helped by the fact that *Herzeleid* was

PRESS/EUGENIO RECUENCO.

Off to Slimelight, chaps?

PRESS/ERIK HACKENSCHMIDT. CARL G. HARDT WORDS: MELANIE ASCHENBRENNER TRANSLATION: BELINDA COOPER. BOX IMAGES: PRESS/STEFAN SCHUDLICH

"TILL HAD GLOVES ON THAT SHOT SPARKS. I AM NOT CERTAIN THEY HAD PERMISSION TO DO THAT"

MATTHIAS SAYER, FARMER BOYS

slow out of the gates. "After we released the first record, nothing happened," says Flake. "Nobody wanted to buy it because nobody knew about it. We just played and played and played, and slowly the people in the crowd got more and more."

Zak Tell is the singer in Clawfinger, the Swedish band whose Jacob Hellner-produced album Rammstein had liked. In late 1995 and early 1996, Clawfinger took the German band out as support on a handful of shows.

"They asked to do it. Simple as that," Zak says today. "We were very wary of them at first. Here were a band wearing military uniforms, singing in German and rolling their 'r's. We were worried they could turn out to be fascist or Nazi idiots. So, we got a friend who spoke German to translate some of their lyrics, just so we could satisfy ourselves with what they were all about."

By the middle of 1996, Rammstein were headlining their own tour. The venues were small but sold out – there was the sense of an underground band starting to get a lot more attention from a wider audience. It helped that the band's striking visual image was starting to come into focus onstage – the days of six men wearing street clothes were over. A penchant for pyros was increasingly apparent, too.

"They had a lot of fireworks and also fire on the stage," recalls Matthias Sayer, singer with Stuttgart groove-metal band Farmer Boys, who supported Rammstein on several dates in 1996. "Till had gloves on, which would shoot out sparks as well. I am not too certain they had official permission to do some of it back then. You had to have the right permits, and the chances are Rammstein were slightly bending the rules. But it looked very impressive. They knew what they were doing, and really did make an impression on everyone."

Mainland Europe was starting to take notice of this strange band from the old GDR who looked and sounded like little that had come before. But their Eastern Bloc background still presented a degree of culture clash even back home in the reunited Germany.

"They were about 10 years older than us and they had also been through the whole East German system, so we found it difficult to relate to their experiences growing up – it was very different to what we'd been used to,"

MADE IN BERLIN

Carl G. Hardt grew up in the GDR and met Feeling B at a festival in 1987 while he was producing a film about music and young people. His footage of East German bands and Rammstein's early days is included in his forthcoming documentary, *Achtung! Wir Kommen, Und Wir Kriegen Euch Alle* ('Look Out! We're Coming to Get You!').

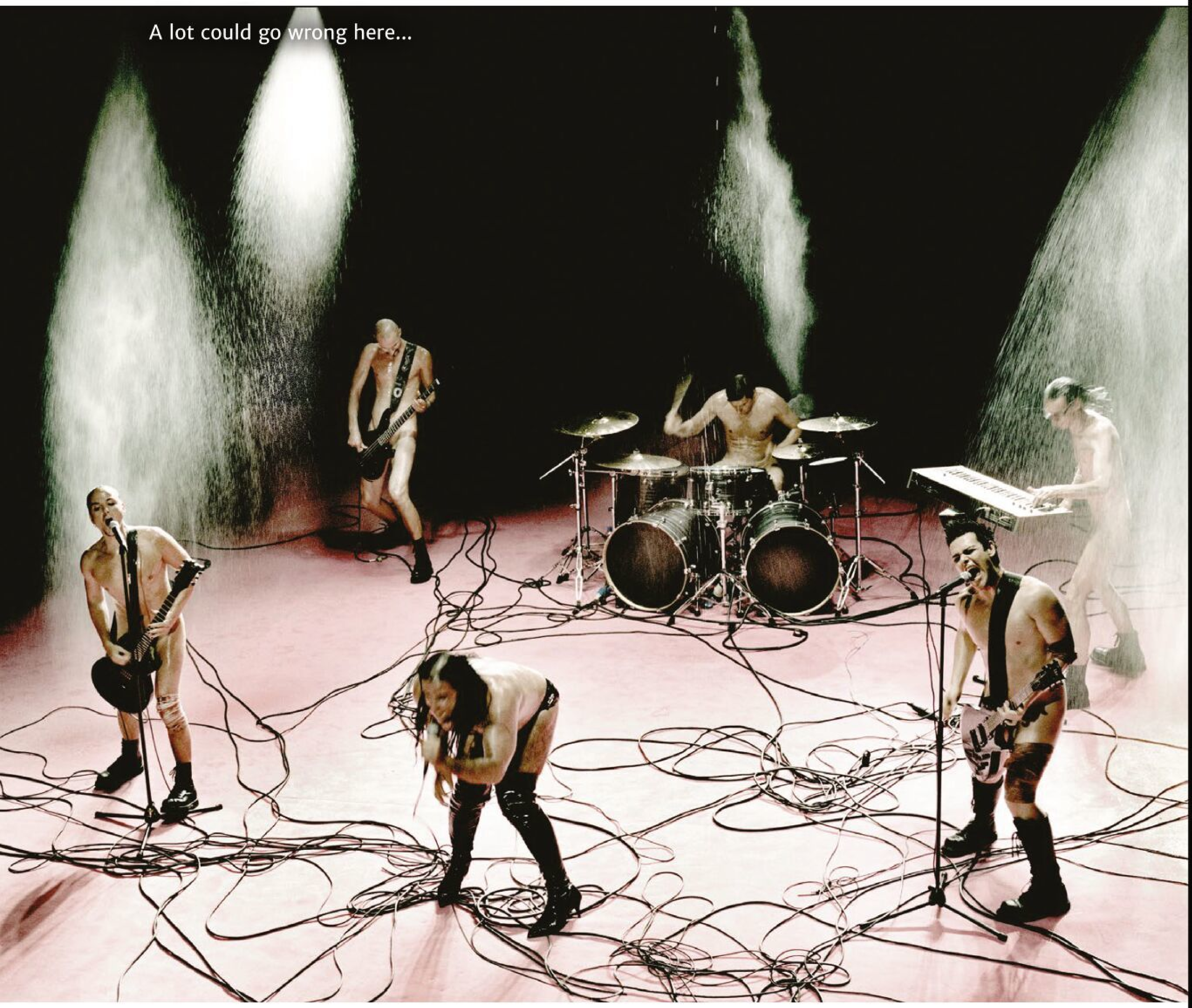
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU MET FEELING B AT THE FESTIVAL?
"A few days later, [singer] Aljoscha turned up on my doorstep. We cooked dinner and drank red wine, and he explained why his band absolutely had to be in the film. Because Aljoscha was clever and funny and overflowing with energy, he quickly had me convinced. We set up a day to shoot in Hohen Viecheln, a village near the Baltic Sea. A funky, well-attended punk festival took place there, and it ended up in the film we made. The film is called *Flüstern und Schreien – Whisper and Scream*; it opened in 1988 and was successful."

WHAT WAS THE SITUATION LIKE FOR BANDS AFTER THE FALL OF THE WALL, IN 1989?
"In this newly reunited Germany, no one was waiting for bands from the East. So Feeling B, for example, went on tour in the United States. Some of the musicians from the scene gave up and looked for jobs so they could make ends meet. Others started new bands with new names and new concepts, such as Subway To Sally, The Inchtabokatables, Tanzwut, In Extremo, and of course Rammstein. You can see by the names where these bands were going on their musical journey – towards the US and the rest of the world."

HOW DID YOU FIRST START FILMING WITH RAMMSTEIN?
"Shortly after Christmas of 1993, Aljoscha called and suggested that I film what was tentatively Feeling B's last concert in June 1994. He also told me that Paul, Flake and Christoph were already working on a new project called Rammstein. My cameramen filmed a two-hour Feeling B concert. The same year, I first filmed Rammstein."

WHERE DID YOU FILM THEM?
"I had discussed it all with Paul and Flake. They said proudly, 'There's a great building on the edge of the city, in the countryside, with a built-in studio. That's where we're producing our first music cassette!' In my mind I was seeing Abbey Road Studios, and I was excited that some colour would come into the film, and we wouldn't just be filming in squatted apartments, in courtyards and basements. When I got there, though, my cameraman and I found a little cottage in an overgrown garden. In any case, deafening music was now blasting from the house's every crack and joint, and a large dog charged towards us, barking aggressively."

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?
"Paul held the German Shepherd's head still while we filmed her wagging tail. In the film, you can see the dog politely knocking on the musicians' door and then running curiously around the room. The camera takes a 'dog's-eye view', and my cameraman then went around the room in the dog's place. During the 'dog walk', the musicians are introduced individually from her perspective. I'd found a successful way to bring the band into the film."


A lot could go wrong here...

says Matthias. "This wasn't a negative really, just a little odd for us. It seemed we had very little in common, even though both bands were German."

The six members of Rammstein are the first to admit that Rammstein were a tough proposition for many people to get their heads around. But like most things relating to this deceptively enigmatic and frequently misunderstood band, there's a method to the madness in everything they do.

"Part of the reason Rammstein were so progressive is that we felt so much censorship back in the day," says Richard. "In Rammstein, we were trying to get rid of all kind of censorship – from other people and from ourselves, too. I think that's why we all went, 'What the fuck, we don't care.'"

That single-mindedness would pay off a couple of years later when cult director David Lynch selected them to appear on the soundtrack to his 1997 arthouse movie *Lost Highway*. Suddenly, this insane German band with the flaming jackets and funny accents were opened up to a whole new audience. That same year their masterful second album, *Sehnsucht*, turned them into stars across mainland Europe, dragging the first record up by its bootlaces in the process.

"After the second record, people remembered the first," says Flake. "We had a gold record with *Sehnsucht* and about five years later, the first record went gold."

"IN RAMMSTEIN WE WERE TRYING TO GET RID OF ALL KINDS OF CENSORSHIP"

RICHARD Z. KRUSPE

Over the next few years, Rammstein weathered a series of storms, taking in everything from onstage arrests and misguided accusations of Nazism to a wrong-headed guilt-by-association in the wake of 1999's Columbine school massacre. Today, they stand as one of the great success stories of the last two decades – and certainly one of the most unlikely. No one could ever have seen that coming. Especially not these six misfits from the other side of the Wall who have spent 25 years and counting bucking every trend imaginable.

"We never could be a western band," says Flake, "because we learned in our youth that it's important to work together and one person is not that important. And that is why we are still together."

MORE THAN A FEELING

Before he co-founded Rammstein, Flake Lorenz was a member of Feeling B. An East German underground art/folk-punk band founded by in 1983 by charismatic singer Aljoscha Rompe, they released three albums between 1989 and 1993. Aljoscha died in 2000 after suffering a severe asthma attack. In 2007, Flake oversaw the release of the compilation *Grün & Blau* ('Green and Blue'). Here, the keyboard player looks back on his time on the East German scene with Feeling B...

TELL US WHAT IT WAS LIKE GROWING UP IN EAST GERMANY IN THE 70s AND 80s.
"Well, I loved it because it was the only thing I knew. The rent was about 25 bucks. If we played a show with the band, we would each get about 100 bucks. That means I had to play a show every two months to survive. Insurance was 10 bucks a month, for medicine and stuff, and the rest was more or less free. We never had to get out of the apartment, we never had to care for a job, we were never afraid for anything. The only thing we were afraid of was the third World War."

DID YOU LISTEN TO ANY WESTERN ROCK MUSIC GROWING UP?
"Of course. We only listened to Western music. There were professional East German rock bands called Puhdys, Karat and Berluc – they were good musicians but bad ideas."

DID BANDS HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THE STATE?
"You had to play for a commission, and then they would decide if you could get a licence and officially play or not. But all bands made a special set just for this evening – they played the slow songs, changed some words so it was not so evil. Most bands got the licence."

FEELING B'S SINGER ALJOSCHA WAS SEVERAL YEARS OLDER THAN YOU. WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
"He had a lot of energy. We were the serious people who made the work, and he was a crazy guy who had the ideas. And so we worked well together. He was the head and we were the foot."

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM HIM?
"I learned that everything is possible – just do it. Don't think what other people think. Don't care."

DID YOU EVER HAVE ANY GIGS SHUT DOWN BY THE AUTHORITIES?
"No. But sometimes we were so drunken that we had to stop the show, because Aljoscha was asleep while the show was on."

WERE FEELING B AN ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT BAND? WERE YOU AGAINST THE AUTHORITIES?
"'Against' is not the real word. We sung about personal things. If you say some things about the world, you have to start with yourself – with your own opinion. We sung about us: 'Why I don't feel well.' And then you the listener have to make you story. We were never openly against the government because we liked to play and we didn't want to risk losing the licence. But in our hearts, we liked the GDR. We didn't like everything about it, but we liked the main idea of socialism."

ALL IMAGES: PRESS. BOX WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

THE BAND THAT MADE METAL A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

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HOW OZZFEST CHANGED THE WORLD

From breaking bands to causing controversy, **Ozzfest** has brought metal to the masses like no other event. We look back at the festival that broke the mould through the eyes of the bands that played it...

WORDS: RICH CHAMBERLAIN

Back in the mid-90s, the notion of a travelling,all-metal festival was batshit crazy. Monsters Of Rock was dead, Download was still a twinkle in Andy Copping's eye, and Lollapalooza filled its lineup with dirge such as Ben Folds Five, Cornershop and Coolio. But when Lollapalooza refused to put Ozzy on the bill, a frustrated Sharon Osbourne was spurred on to create a mini touring festival of her own, and Ozzfest was born. In the 20 years since, it's grown beyond recognition, giving us iconic moment after iconic moment, such as Fred Durst emerging from a giant toilet in 1998, Slipknot kicking serious arse from the second stage in 1999, and Sharon turning the power off on Maiden in 2005. Digging deep into its evolution, we asked 10 of its veterans to talk us through their memories from the last 20 years of chaos.

1996: THE FIRST OZZFEST CHANGES METAL FOREVER

It would soon become a globe-touring behemoth, but the first ever Ozzfest made just three stops: Phoenix, San Bernardino and Anchorage. It may have been a slow and steady approach, but there were no compromises with the lineup: Ozzy topped the bill, backed by Slayer, Danzig, Biohazard, Sepultura, Fear Factory and Narcotic Gypsy. The second stage, meanwhile, featured the likes of Neurosis and Coal Chamber. Not a bad way to usher in an entire sea change on the festival circuit.

Twenty years on, Fear Factory's Burton C Bell recalls that putting together a metal fest was a ballsy move by the Osbournes. "In the mid-90s, metal was waning, and alternative was the king," he says. "Ozzfest put metal back at the forefront. We knew were part of something special. Metal bands in the 90s and today can thank Ozzy and Ozzfest for a lot, because they proved to the world that metal is not a fleeting genre, and is full of fiercely loyal fans. The bands all had a great time, too. There was a lot of drinking going on – perhaps too much, sometimes!"

Fear Factory's second album, *Demanufacture*, had been out for a year, and the band were constantly on the road. "The album had been doing well in Europe, but the States is a hard nut to crack," says Burton. We had to prove ourselves to an audience that wasn't always listening, because a lot of them were just there for Ozzy. I learnt a lot from being able to watch him every night – I was a young kid taking mental pointers from the other bands on the bill."

Ozzfest was a hit with fans and bands, but few would envisage what was to come over the next two decades, least of all Burton. "There was talk of them doing it again the next year, and we wanted to do it again, but we never thought it would last as long as it has."

1997: SABBATH RETURN & MANSON MANIA IS BORN

It was the Ozzy-fronted Sabbath's first tour since 1979. With Bill Ward sitting this one out, Faith No More sticksman Mike Bordin joined the Double O, Tony Iommi and Geezer Butler onstage. "Those guys hadn't done a lot together for a long time," Mike recalls. "That made it intense. It was emotional. You talk about Axl and Slash getting together, but Ozzy and Tony was a fuckin' big deal. For me, it was like being between Mount Everest and Mount Fuji, and you're a very small pebble in an enormous valley."

It wasn't just the returning Sabs that made Ozzfest '97 stick in the memory – the Osbournes had secured a huge coup by signing Marilyn Manson up to join halfway through. Back then, adulation and chaos followed the God Of Fuck around in equal measure. His second show of the tour, at the Polaris Amphitheater, Columbus, went down in the annuls of metal infamy.

While protesters picketed outside, news that Ozzy was ill and unable to perform that night sent those inside into an explosive fury. Mike Bordin had chosen this particular night to share a few Black ➤

"WE WERE DRIVING THROUGH THE RIOT, ABSOLUTELY HAMMERED!"

WHEN OZZY CANCELLED, MIKE BORDIN WAS AT THE CENTRE OF THE PROTESTS

The God Of Fuck at Ozzfest in New York, 1997. Truly the Antichrist Superstar

OZZY: FRANK WHITE/MARILYN MANSON: GETTY

SLAYEEEEERRRR played the first UK Ozzfest in 1998 as part of yet another epic lineup

"IT WAS LIKE I'D WOKEN UP IN A NIGHTMARE"

DROWNING POOL'S CJ PIERCE REMEMBERS THE DAY BANDMATE DAVE WILLIAMS PASSED AWAY

Tooth Grins with Dimebag, giving him an *interesting* perspective of the carnage that was unfolding around him.

"All hell broke loose with the riot," he says. "What did I do? I went and started drinking more. I was shitfaced drunk. I couldn't see straight; I had to close one eye. Somebody had gotten a golf cart and we were driving through the riot in this cart absolutely hammered. I had a hand over one eye, saying, 'Oh look, they're burning the box office and the fences…'"

The legendary Dimebag played with Pantera at Ozzfest's UK debut

1998: OZZFEST MAKES ITS UK DEBUT

With Ozzfest a runaway hit Stateside, Ozzy and Sharon were keen to bring the travelling circus to their home turf. On June 20, 1998, the Milton Keynes Bowl played host to an all-star lineup featuring Sabbath, an Ozzy solo set, Foo Fighters, Pantera, Soulfly, Slayer, Coal Chamber and more.

"The festival had just exploded since '96," says Coal Chamber/Devildriver mainman and serial Ozzfest performer, Dez Fafara. "The Osbournes took the English thing to America, and then brought it back to the UK. It was a trip. It was as if the festival was going back to its roots, even though it had started in America. A lot of the bands from those early years are still around today, and we have Sharon and Ozzy to thank for that. We were humbled to be asked to play – there are a million bands that want to get onto Ozzfest every time it's on."

With Coal Chamber riding high on the back of *Loco,* Dez recognised the impact a killer Ozzfest performance could have. "Before we played, I had a conversation with some other members of the band who shall remain nameless, and I said to them, 'Hey, stay semi-sober for this one. This show has to be tight'," he says. "We had a really good show. We were surrounded by a bunch of killer bands that day, but I knew that even though it was simple music, when we were tight and flawless, no one could beat us."

Sharon ended up managing Coal Chamber's career, and the Ozzfest rolled ever onwards. "We wanted that festival to do well, because we felt if the Osbournes won, we all won, because there were doing so much for bands. Taking Ozzfest to the UK felt like a real win."

2001: THE UNDERGROUND RISES UP

In 2001, nu metal was at its peak, reflected in an Ozzfest lineup featuring Linkin Park, Disturbed, Papa Roach and more. But scratch a little deeper, and the festival was giving a platform to underground US metal and hardcore acts who were struggling to catch a break.

"Ozzfest 2001 to 2006 is a who's who of all of the different metal subgenres," says Hatebreed frontman Jamey Jasta. "Ozzy and Sharon have given so many people the opportunity to have a career and gain fans. These bands didn't have other mediums to do that. If you want to be a successful band in a metal subgenre, you don't have MTV, you won't get front-page YouTube placement, you won't get on the late-night TV shows, and you're sure as hell not going to get on radio. So when you get an opportunity like Ozzfest, you have to roll with it."

Jamey reckons that the Double O led by example by shining a spotlight on the underground.

"For Ozzy to give his name and put so much time into a travelling festival, even at times when metal was almost a dirty word, it is incredible. Pre-Big 4 comeback, Metallica were taking out Kid Rock [in 2000], while Ozzy had Deftones and the edgier metal bands on Ozzfest. Ozzy led the charge. Ozzfest bridged the gap."

By 2001, Ozzfest's metal summer camp vibe was truly established, and while Jasta recalls wild times aplenty, some of the names have been conveniently forgotten with the passage of time. "There were so many wild moments on Ozzfest, but I shouldn't talk about them. People are grown up and have kids now and are married. Let's say there was drinking, fighting and fucking, as

Ozzfest familehhh! Metallica headlined in 2008 at Pizza Hut Park (yes, Pizza Hut Park) in Frisco, Texas

Dave Williams fronting Drowning Pool at Ozzfest 2002 in New Jersey. A few weeks later, he passed away

ALL IMAGES: GETTY

well as crashing golf carts, but we don't know who it happened to or when it happened and in what year, ha ha ha!"

2002: TRAGEDY STRIKES ON THE ROAD

Nu metal remained a major draw as Ozzfest toured Europe and the States in 2002, with the likes of POD, Kittie, Mushroomhead and Drowning Pool on board. But it was the shocking loss of the latter's frontman, Dave Williams, midway through the US leg, that the tour is remembered for.

"We did the UK and European shows, and we got to play with Tool, Slayer and so many great bands," recalls Drowning Pool guitarist CJ Pierce. "We had the US shows and everything was going great, and then tragedy struck." Dave was founded dead in the band's tourbus, due to an undiagnosed heart condition. He was just 30 years old. "We were planning to work on the next record after Ozzfest, so I went into the hotel room to do some writing," recalls CJ. "I was working on some stuff and my phone kept ringing, but I kept shutting it off because I was working. It kept ringing, and I realised something wasn't right. I walked out of my room and I saw some of the Ill Niño guys and the Meshuggah guys, and everyone was crying. Everyone was looking at me, and I thought, 'Oh fuck, something's not right.' I saw my guitar tech, and that's when I found out the news. There were police barricades and a helicopter flying above us. It was like I woke up in a nightmare."

The final three weeks of Ozzfest wrapped up while the metal community mourned their loss. "I'm lucky to have known Dave," CJ says. "He was one of those stars that burns brightest and burns out fastest. Now I treat every show like it's the last show I'll play, and the Ozzfest shows we have played since have been really special."

2004: ROB HALFORD STEPS IN FOR OZZY

As Ozzfest 2004 rolled into New Jersey, the mainman was struck down with bronchitis. Perhaps mindful that his cancellation in Columbus in 1997 had gone down badly, the pressure was on to find a solution. Dez Fafara was on the bill with Devildriver that day, and among those bracing themselves for the worst.

"We were backstage, leaving catering, and we had heard that Ozzy was really sick and he didn't know if he could play. The talk was to get on the bus and get ready to split, because there could be riots," he recalls. "We thought it could go really sour really fast." But then a chrome-domed, leather-sporting metal superhero swooped in and saved the day: Rob Halford agreed to front Sabbath. In any circumstances this would be pretty mindblowing, but it was all the more incredible given that Halford had only recently reunited with Judas Priest and had blasted through a full set right before taking the stage with the Sabs. The shit was never going to hit the fan on Halford's watch.

"Priest and Sabbath come from the same place, born and raised. We go all the way back to when both bands started, and so we have so much in common. Any chance we had we were in each other's company, and as soon as we are, the rock'n'roll stories start flying!" he says. "We love and support each other, so whenever we can help out, we do. In this case it was just mates making sure the show went on." Indeed, the show went on, and provided an 'I was there' moment for the tens of thousands of lucky swines who caught it live.

2008: METALLICA JOIN THE OZZFEST FAMILEH

In 2008, Ozzfest scaled back the mayhem, opting for just one show in Frisco, Texas, rather than a full tour. But what a show it was. Having headed up back-to-back Ozzfests, Ozzy's solo band took a step back and settled for second billing. But surely it'd take a gigantic act to oust the festival's founder from his headliner spot? Enter Metallica. It was a return to the festival for bassist Rob Trujillo, who had previously played as a member of Ozzy's band.

"I remember Sharon talking about doing this festival, creating an environment that really focused on metal bands, and really turning it into a rock'n'roll circus – and I mean that in a positive way," Rob says of his Ozzfest origins. "It was an exciting time, because we had nothing to lose, so for me to be a part of that in the initial launch was really cool." Jumping forward to 2008, Rob reckons that sharing the bill with Metallica only served to push Ozzy to put on the show of his life. "I know for Ozzy, he's fired up, man, he wants to deliver the goods – he wants to show Metallica what he can deliver," he smiles. "I know how he feels. And he did; he had a great show, and it was definitely a special moment for me to be ›

Just when you thought Ozzfest couldn't get any better, it teamed up with Knotfest, making it at least nine times more awesome!

Korn's Munky at the UK Ozzfest in 2010, clearly dreaming of those Tel Aviv beaches…

Rob Halford, Ozzy Osbourne and Nikki Sixx team up to announce Ozzfest 2010

Ozzfest Meets Knotfest 2016: Zakk Wylde, Geezer Butler, Ozzy Osbourne, Sharon Osbourne, Corey Taylor… We're not worthy!

Steel Panther's Michael Starr wouldn't know tact if it bit him in the arse

reconnected with that tribe, to the Ozzfest universe. Because I was on the Metallica team, and only doing the one show, it was like, 'Wow!' I was excited, but I wish we could have done more. Maybe in the future, we'll be able to."

2010: OZZFEST HITS ISRAEL…

If launching a metal festival in mid-90s North America seemed a bold move, taking said festival to Israel was fucking insane. Again, Ozzfest bucked the trend, holding a one-day show in Tel Aviv in 2010. First and foremost, there were security concerns given the relatively recent history of conflict throughout the region. Then, on a business level, who knew if this untapped market really gave two shits about a metal show? As it turned out, Ozzfest Israel was one in a long line of highlights for the fest.

"I had no idea what to expect," says guitarist James 'Munky' Shaffer, whose band, Korn, sub-headlined for Ozzy. "That show was crazy. The crowd was huge and went nuts. I had no idea that it would be as great as it was. Just being in that part of the world, there's a different energy over there. There are all of these religious beliefs at every angle. It felt like the spiritual centre of the Earth, and you could feel that clearly. I had a great time; it was a great experience. The Ozzfest guys did a great job."

It'd be rude to go all that way and not take in the sights, right? Or at least top up your tan. "Everyone felt safe and secure, and we were able to explore a little bit," says Munky. "Jonathan and Fieldy took a trip to Jerusalem. I chilled on the beach in Tel Aviv. That show was like a vacation. It was great that so many people in that part of the world could come together and enjoy music. They could sit back and forget about their differences for a day and enjoy some good rock music. Music can do that; music can be a real healer."

2013: …AND THEN JAPAN

Becoming ever more ambitious, Ozzfest pushed into Japan, with a two-day bill topped by Slipknot and Sabbath in Chiba City, 25 miles outside Tokyo. In an unlikely culture clash, Steel Panther were sandwiched between acts from the Far East, so they decided to play one of the most controversial songs they could think of.

"Our drummer, Stix Zadinia, said, 'Alright, let's play *Asian Hooker!*'" says frontman Michael Starr. "I said, 'You want me to sing *Asian Hooker*?! C'mon, man! Alright!' I went out to sing it, and people knew it, and they enjoyed it."

The crowd reaction was different from what Panther were used to, though. Instead of laughter or gasps of shock, they were met with an overwhelming quiet. "In between the songs in Japan, they are absolutely silent, because that is their culture. We were thinking we were blowing it – we didn't know what was happening!" says Stix. "But that's how they are. They clap really fucking loud, and then they go silent and wait. Because we talk a lot between songs, that silence went on for a while. But it was a fantastic experience."

The Japanese crowd may have reacted well, but Michael isn't convinced that their *unique* humour was well suited to the festival. "I think most of the comedy, the fun part of everything we do, kind of went over their heads a little bit," he says. "Because they're so PC there, it was hard for people to go, 'Oh, OK, am I supposed to enjoy this or not?' But I think it went fine. It went so good, we've hardly been back since!"

2016: OZZFEST COLLIDES WITH KNOTFEST

For its 20th anniversary, Ozzfest joined forces with the new kid on the block: Knotfest. The result was a one-off, two-day super-show featuring the likes of Slayer, Megadeth and Disturbed, as well as Sabbath and Slipknot.

"It was mindblowing that we were asked to be part of Ozzfest," says Jill Janus, whose band Huntress, played on the first day. "It's so big that you get instant gratification from your performance. Of course, that's not a good thing if you blow it; we knew we had to bring it, hard."

"Bringing it" was made difficult due to the baking conditions of San Bernardino, California, in early September. "Our set was at 12:30pm, and we performed in nearly 100˚ Fahrenheit [38˚ Celsius]. It was brutal."

But Ozzfest once again proved itself as the ultimate exposure opportunity for rising bands. Twenty years in, it remained a major draw. "We weren't expecting a large crowd, however, it was massive. We did a meet-and-greet with a line that was an hour long," she says. "Any band I know of would definitely suck a dick to get on that bill. Unfortunately, it's not that easy, ha ha ha!"

Ozzfest's history may be littered with booze, stolen golf carts and even riots, but it's not always wall-to-wall carnage for everyone involved in the show.

"I saw Sabbath play in 2013, and that was life-changing," Jill says. "This time, I opted for vacuuming the tourbus and laying in my bunk listening to the massive firework show that was going on. I fell asleep after hearing Ozzy introducing that, and I dreamt of demons and rivers. It was perfect. Ozzfest meets Knotfest was a perfect marriage, and I'm hoping it comes back. If anyone can do it, Ozzfest can." ✠

"WE PLAYED *ASIAN HOOKER* IN JAPAN!"

WHO LET STEEL PANTHER PLAY AT OZZFEST JAPAN? COME ON, OWN UP…

ALL IMAGES: GETTY

“I DON’T THINK SATAN HAS DONE QUITE AS WELL AS I HAVE IN THE PAST YEAR.”

THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

In late 1996, Marilyn Manson was riding high on the success of his breakthrough album *Antchrist Superstar* and his reputation as America's bogeyman. That was when *Metal Hammer* caught up with him for one of his most in-depth and revealing interviews ever.

WORDS: JONATHAN SELZER

GETTY

If you find yourself wondering where the line between fact and fiction lies when it comes to Brian Warner, aka Marilyn Manson, be prepared for a long stint. It's not just that, in the wake of self-fulfilling prophecy that was *Antichrist Superstar*, its protagonist's status as rock'n'roll's most potent icon has taken on all the religious connotations the word suggests. Whether he's your saviour or Satan's representative on Earth, he's become a figure attributed with almost mystical powers, whether in terms of his hold over the nation's disaffected youth that resulted in a congressional hearing, or the debased practices he's supposed to have performed, all dredged up from the fevered ids of a religious right all as beholden to an apocalyptic reckoning as *Antichrist Superstar* is.

I'm staring into the eye of the storm, in a hotel room 23 floors above New York's Time Square. Down below, the arcane figures and acronyms of the DOW Jones Index race across their ribbon screens, leaving you in the thrall of your own ignorance, and a few blocks further down, a digital clock counts out the last days of the millennium.

Manson's iris-bleaching contact lens has the effect of making him look like some divinely stricken visionary, his eye tuned into different frequency. For a man who has received death threats, bomb threats and bans, he appears remarkably serene.

"I feel very much in control of what I've become, he says. "Even the false elements of what people perceive me as are part of what Marilyn Manson has always been. It's always been about being a ball of confusion. I think I'm the source of endless conversations in many households, confusions between parents and children, anger amongst religious groups, and that in itself is an important part of culture. It makes people think.

Everyone who reacts to Marilyn Manson finds themselves in some way exposed and transformed. He has a habit of amplifying people's true nature – the bigotry and venom luring in the Christian psychology, the aching hunger for more building up within his fans – to the point where everyone in on the act takes on a specific role, becomes a parody of themselves.

The Marilyn Manson phenomenon has become theatre, a vivid portrayal of what is actually one of the most fundamental stories of all – the rite of passage. Marilyn Manson himself is no exception. "I feel that in this past year, making the album *Antichrist Superstar* was something that each person has to put themselves through to really become themselves. Everybody has to go through that sort of transformation in their own way. So now I feel more like me than ever. Because *Antichrist Superstar*, in a sense, has come and gone. I've lived through it and now I want to go beyond it and write a new album with a new perspective." ▶

Manson: the God Of F**k in full effect.

The trouble with being labelled "shocking" by the so-called moral guardians is that there is a temptation to come to the defence of the accused by denying that they're shocking at all, even though the evidence may be staring at you from the other side of the dock.

The typically English response to Marilyn Manson has been to pass off the hysteria as a storm in a teacup (despite the fact that America is a very large teacup), reducing everything to cartoonish insignificance. That's incredibly lazy. There is a story to be told, and the only way to understand Marilyn Manson is to get involved, to credit him with that power, watch him take effect.

The title of "Antichrist Superstar" sounds as though it was calculated to shock.
"Absolutely, and the symbol for the album is the universal symbol for 'shock hazard,' which I thought was ironic. That was why I chose it. It has a very powerful, totalitarian element to it, which is very rock'n'roll. But I think it described perfectly what I set out to do. And what I predicted I would have done was to become a superstar by going against the mainstream to become part of the mainstream, but opposing it, by accepting the paradox of that.

"People complain and say that I'm portraying Nazi imagery, but I would be one of the first people that would be destroyed by the Nazis. That's the irony, that I'm making fun of Christianity in saying that it's fascist, but at the same time, I'm saying so is rock'n'roll. It's all the same."

Do you think every decade needs something more to be shocked by?
"There needs to be someone who leads the pack and changes the boundaries that have been set by the people before them."

The Beatles once said they were bigger than God. Maybe only in America would the reaction to that statement have been so violent.
"I've said that Marilyn Manson was bigger than Satan, because people align me with Satanism, only taking half of what I represent. I don't think Satan had done quite as well as I have in the past year, or made the Christians quite as mad."

They seem to think that you're his embodiment.
"I am to them. To me, I don't consider myself evil, or what I do necessarily wrong. But by their definition, I'm probably as bad as you can be, which I aim to be, because I aim to destroy their definitions."

Imagine a middle-aged woman in the mid-West, whose whole life had been based around the Christian creed. Then you come along and say it's all shit. You can see how she's going to get a little pissed off. Maybe people react the strongest, not just because you're denying their God, but because you're taking away all the structures they've built their lives on.

"I'M SAYING CHRISTIANITY IS FASCIST, BUT SO IS ROCK'N'ROLL."

GETTY X2

"I think you're right. That's why I hope that what I say affects a generation that hasn't built that structure up. Because I grew up with that structure too. So that's why it was just as hard for me to try and decide what I believed, if I was going to be in charge of my life, if I was going to be a victim or I was going to be in control.

"I think that a lot of people are afraid that it's easier to not think. It's easier to just accept things and to not question them. When you question them, you have to start worrying about believing in yourself. And so many more people are content with just being told what they believe.

"People can't even decide if they like a rock album. They have to read a review. 'Well, it's got five stars on it – I think I'll buy it'. People in America, by nature, prefer to be told what they think than to think for themselves. It's just a matter of fear.

"Once you cross that line and make that transformation, you can't imagine being that other person you used to be. It's just like Nietzche's Superman, the idea of mankind in general, to someone who's experienced so much more is like a lower form of intelligence. You almost have pity, in a way."

Particularly in America, religion seems to have even less sympathy for mankind than you do.
"Right. Here, religion is more of a hat that people put on when it's convenient, if they're trying to make

Marilyn Manson. the band: (l-r) Madonna Wayne Gacy, Twiggy Ramirez, Manson, Zim Zum, Ginger Fish.

money or to make themselves feel as though they have something worthwhile in their life. I don't think people are really spiritual in America. I think very few people here even have a spirit. It' s a lot different in Europe; people have a greater appreciation and understanding of music and art, and want to discover and find meaning behind it. Here, people would rather sensationalise. That's why Marilyn Manson has always been a mockery of sensationalism. When people are mocking me as a gimmick, I'm mocking gimmickry."

There's an alternative view; that religion is actually fundamental to America, it's just that because it's also such a capitalist country, making money out of it is the only tangible means they have to measure their beliefs. Do you feel that you're engaged in a cultural war as much as a religious war?
"Or even political, because it's really a struggle of power. It's not even so much about God, it's who's going to control the minds of America's youth, because it's who wants to take their money. Do they want to buy my records or do they want to throw their money on the offering plate? So I don't think a lot of times they care what their kids are listening to, they just want to make sure that they're listening to them.

"But I'm trying to set people free and let them be controlled by themselves. I'm not trying to control them, I'm trying to open their minds. In a sense, that's controlling them, but by destroying one part of Christianity, you're creating something very similar. I think that if you know that – at least, going in to it – it's not as dangerous as what you're destroying."

But you found your own sense of freedom without a guide. Wasn't it more of a disposition than a choice?
"Well, I don't think I feel as though I ever belonged. I always felt like an outsider. One thing that occurred to me is that there are certain people that don't really belong on earth, that earth has the potential for such greatness, but something with the potential for such greatness also has the obligation for such terribleness, and some people belong somewhere else. I don't know where that somewhere else is, but I feel like I don't belong here, that I can say what I have to say, just like other people."

In the light of recent attacks, do you feel that Marilyn Manson has become a sign of the times?
"It is a sign of the times, but it is no different, really, from the Beatles or David Bowie or Jim Morrison or Elvis Presley. There's always someone for each era who sums up the zeitgeist, and that's what I've become, but maybe more potent than the ones before.

"But I think that it's just as necessary as the story of Jesus in the Bible. I think he was a person like all the ones that I've mentioned, and like myself, someone who came from beyond everyone's understanding, and had ideas that people couldn't grasp, and some people wanted to worship him, and some people wanted to destroy him.

"I think, strangely enough, he's more similar to me than Christians would like to believe. That's what I'm exploring on the new album I'm working on. If *Antichrist Superstar* was about my relationship to the story of Lucifer, his fall from grace and wanting to be your own God, what I'm writing now is my relationship to the life of Christ on earth, as a martyr."

Do you really see your battle in biblical terms, if on a smaller scale?
"I think so, and I think not even on a smaller scale. John the Baptist, when he sat down – and probably he was on a lot of drugs – and wrote the Book of Revelations, it was clearly open to so many different interpretations, and Christianity evolved so many of its own folklores. There's really no mention of an Antichrist figure in the Bible at all. The only time the Antichrist was mentioned was earlier in the Bible, when people who disbelieved the teachings of Jesus were considered the Antichrist. It was more a body of people; it wasn't even a figure.

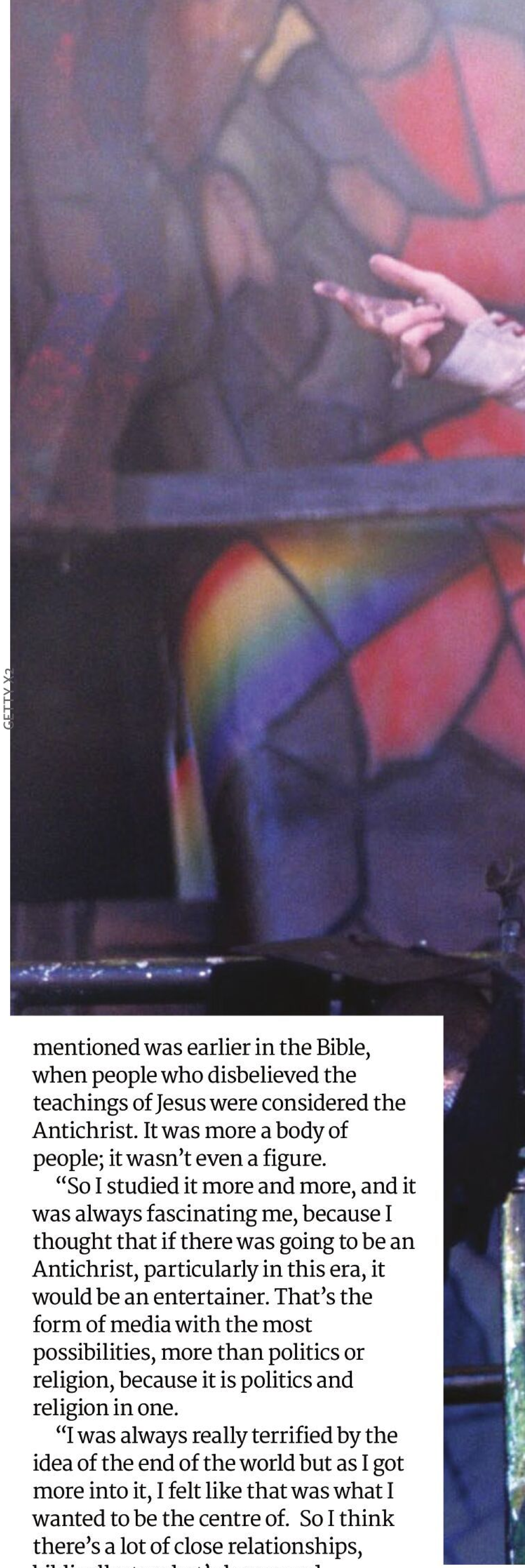
"So I studied it more and more, and it was always fascinating me, because I thought that if there was going to be an Antichrist, particularly in this era, it would be an entertainer. That's the form of media with the most possibilities, more than politics or religion, because it is politics and religion in one.

"I was always really terrified by the idea of the end of the world but as I got more into it, I felt like that was what I wanted to be the centre of. So I think there's a lot of close relationships, biblically, to what's happened.

"Y'know, maybe it's intentional, me pushing it that way, or maybe it's a prophecy. I remember reading Nietzche's [philosophical novel] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He mentioned that there will come an age when an Antichrist will really capture the hearts of everyone, will fascinate everyone by its own destruction, and he would hate himself to become himself.

"I read that just recently, and that really described a part of my life as it happened. I think a lot of people have been intelligent enough to have the insight to predict things like Marilyn Manson. I don't think they were necessarily speaking about me specifically, but it seems to fall into place."

Satan will see you now.


GETTY X2

Marilyn Manson:
America's most wanted.

A few blocks down, that clock's still ticking. And I'm thinking, the closer it brings us to zero, it's not madness that we stray into, but a terrifying rule of law, where everyone assumes the power to judge, where everyone tries to reduce God into human terms as their own personal witness, the only guide we've given the authority to take us past midnight.

I actually believe in Marilyn Manson. I take him at his word, if only because he's got the story straight. I know the one about the Apocalypse, how anyone with the arrogance (not necessarily a criticism) to believe that they're their own God always assumes the end of the world is nigh. So the story goes, the moment He comes down to see us for what we really are (and surely that what Marilyn Manson is all about – to be seen for what you really are), that's it. Over. Wipe-out. Judgement has been served.

It's only a story. Religious imagery, even the Apocalypse, invoked as metaphors for what are, basically, very human urges.

"That's the way all literature has been. I don't see why the Bible should be any different. It's just a book. I know it's interesting the era we're in now, because so many people think that technology is so evolved, but I think a hundred years ago, people thought the same thing.

"In the Bible, Armageddon was very immediate. They weren't speaking about our time, they were talking about ten or twenty years from when they wrote it, and it's always been the case. There's always been the fear of mankind bringing about its own destruction.

"I think it's interesting now, because, especially with trips to Mars and science becoming so involved, in some ways it's poised to disprove, finally, the existence of God. But at the same time, maybe it's poised to prove the existence of God, but not in the way that we've always thought it to be – that God is part of man."

"I'VE TRIED TO DEBATE WITH CHRISTIANS AND I'M TIRED OF IT."

Christians on the one side, the kids on the other – who, primarily is Marilyn Manson trying to infect?

"I've tried to debate with Christians, and I'm tired of it at this point, because they always like to fall back on the idea that it says so in the Bible, and that's their only defence. I'd much rather speak to someone who has a fresh mind. The younger you are, the more you hold on to what I try and hold on to, which is really magic. The idea that if you believe in something, if you have a dream, it can come true. It's innocence.

"What kids don't realise growing up is that people don't really care whether they're Republican or Democrat, they don't care if they're Christian of Satanist, they only care about making money. People just end up being played as part of that. That's fine with me. That's what America is. I'm not saying I hate it, I'm just trying to show people what it is."

The ultimate paradox is that locked into the freakish figure of Marilyn Manson, the vivid green blusher, the scars visible just beneath his vest, the insubstantial yet towering presence, isn't just an exemplary Christian, but an exemplary American too. No wonder he's the devil made flesh.

The men behind their eponymous debut album; note how the masks have evolved over the years

ALL PICTURES: PRESS

Track listing

742617000027
(sic)
Eyeless
Wait And Bleed
Surfacing
Spit It Out
Tattered And Torn
Frail Limb Nursery
Purity
Liberate
Prosthetics
No Life
Diluted
Only One
Scissors

0. SID WILSON: DJ
1. JOEY JORDISON: DRUMS
2. PAUL GRAY: BASS
3. CHRIS FEHN: PERCUSSION
4. JAMES ROOT: GUITAR
5. CRAIG JONES: SAMPLING
6. SHAWN CRAHAN: PERCUSSION
7. MICK THOMSON: GUITAR
8. COREY TAYLOR: VOCALS

PRODUCED BY: ROSS ROBINSON

The Story Behind...

Slipknot

IT WAS 1999. In terms of changing the face of metal, Slipknot's self-titled album – their first proper label release – was as important as the likes of Black Sabbath or Judas Priest. So how did they record an album that fused all elements of the genre to make one of the most pissed-off albums ever recorded?

WORDS: TOMMY UDO

"If truth be told it was really my wife who persuaded me to sign Slipknot," Roadrunner Records supremo Monte Conner tells *Hammer*. "I really wasn't sure. I liked them but I was prevaricating. That and a character that they had in the band at that time – called, I think, The Baby [aka the mentalist Cuddles – Ed] – swung me."

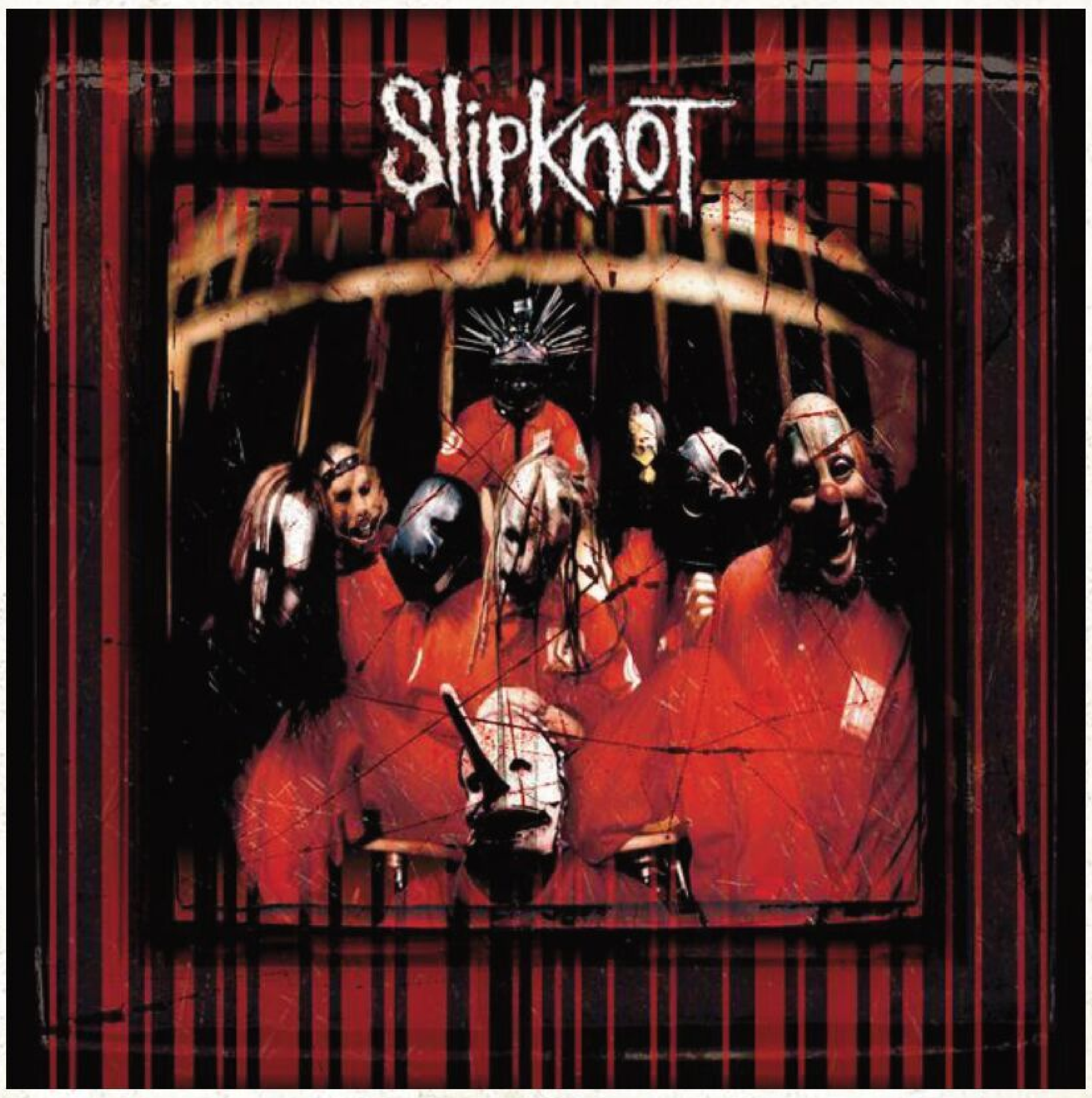
Welcome to the mid 90s, a period that seems almost as remote as the Dark Ages in terms of the phenomenal changes that we have seen in heavy music and in the lives of nine [or so] crazy kids from the Mid-Western USA who had an idealistic American dream to scare the living piss out of the whole motherfucking planet…

"Slipknot is still the heaviest album ever to make it onto the Billboard Top 3," says Corey Taylor. "There's no doubt that the album opened the door to a lot more very extreme bands crossing into the mainstream," says Monte Connor.

"It set the bar," agrees original drummer Joey Jordison.

In retrospect, Slipknot's 1999 self-titled album was a major change in metal. Until then, bands were still caught up in the fallout from grunge, and while the lightweight pop-metal of bands such as Korn, Limp Bizkit and others were keeping hard rock alive and on permanent rotation on MTV, there was nothing outside of the underground to challenge the old guard of Slayer, Metallica and Megadeth, nothing with any *real* original substance.

Slipknot had no idea what they were going to sound like when they formed: stuck in dead-end bands and dead-end day jobs, they wanted to do something – anything – to get the fuck right out of that life. "Back at the time, there was no metal going on in Des Moines, there was no hardcore, nothing. We had all been in bands that had opened up for each other, and the scene had become just



"It was violent. Things were getting broken. It got crazy really quickly"

ROSS ROBINSON

terrible. No one really gave a fuck about music, so we formed Slipknot," says Corey Taylor.

Shawn Crahan used to frequent a club in Des Moines called The Runway where cover bands and tribute bands would try to outshine each other in their slavish imitation of other bands. When the only two original metal bands in Des Moines that he liked broke up, he knew it was time for him to do it himself. Along with vocalist Anders Colsefni and Paul Gray, he formed a band called Meld. Local drummer Joey Jordison was persuaded to come and watch them rehearse: one song they played that night was called *Slipknot*. He knew there and then that he had to be involved.

Joey Jordison worked as a night manager at a gas station. He'd leave band practice at 10pm, take a radio and TV to the gas station and crank out metal all night. Shawn Crahan would come down and they'd start plotting things out. When he left at 5am, they had worked out the blueprint for the band that Slipknot would eventually become. Then he got fired because he was scaring the customers away. "We literally had people pull up, see me and Shawn sitting in the window, floor it out of there and go to the Amoco station across the street."

Slipknot's live shows around the period between 1995 and 1998 were occasionally shambolic affairs, played out in bars in the bad part of town to at best indifferent and at worst hostile crowds. Line-ups changed: original guitarists Donnie Steele and Josh Brainard left, the former after he "found Christ", the latter lost interest. Anders Colsefni left in 1997 and was replaced by Corey Taylor who the band had met when they faced off against Stone Sour in a Battle Of The Bands contest. Craig Jones was tapped to replace Donnie, but he was moved to samples and Mick Thomson joined as lead guitarist. When Josh bolted, Corey suggested a replacement: James Root from his old band, Stone Sour. The band found DJ Sid Wilson later on, and the incarnation of Slipknot that we all love to hate was formed.

There were a few labels interested in Slipknot, particularly in the wake of their debut release *Mate. Feed. Kill. Repeat*, essentially a collection of demo-quality tracks that gives us a snapshot of a band not quite fully formed.

"There were a few tracks on that record that were good that ended up being redone on Slipknot's first Roadrunner album," says Monte Connor.

As well as Roadrunner's Monte Connor, producer Ross Robinson – then riding high on the success of his work with Korn and Limp Bizkit – had heard the album and went to Des Moines to see the band himself, intending to sign them to his IAM imprint. After seeing them and hanging out with them in strip bars – "Des Moines' main form of entertainment," says Corey Taylor a tad wearily – Robinson was impressed by their dedication and by their vision. It was the alchemical reaction that would turn base metal to gold.

Thanks in part to Robinson and Monte Connor's wife, Slipknot were signed and travelled out to Robinson's Indigo Ranch studio in California to start work on the album. For a time, Robinson seemed to be the only person who was totally convinced by Slipknot. As far as the band were concerned, they'd written the album for themselves and had no idea that anyone else outside of their friends and family would buy it.

"We hadn't recorded the album yet; we hadn't gone out and toured; we didn't know how people

"Ross had me pounding that kit so hard that my hands were bleeding. They were covered in these bloody bandages"

JOEY JORDISON

Boiler room: Slipknot go to work.

were going to take us. So we'd just written the songs for us. There was no audience until then," says Corey.

The band travelled economy class in those days and slept where they fell, on couches and on armchairs if they were lucky, but on hard floors if not. Ross Robinson has a reputation as a producer who lays down challenges to bands to get the best work out of them; with Slipknot it was a two-way street.

"I was working out every day just to stay on top of that record," Robinson, a man who seems to hyperventilate with enthusiasm in everyday conversations, told *Hammer*. "It was spontaneous, it was violent. Things were getting broken. We were out there away from anyone else, nobody dropping by or hanging out, it got crazy really quickly."

"Ross had me pounding that kit so hard that my hands were bleeding, and that was when we were just setting up the drum levels. My hands were covered in these bloody bandages," says Joey.

"Ross Robinson pushed us and we pushed back," says Corey. "It was a fight. Ross was throwing punches at us. He was so into it. You can hear that on the record."

"It's a piece of magic," says Robinson. "We made it for us."

It was a brutal, desensitised catalogue of rage and despair. It was like a fusion of the most extreme hip-hop with the most extreme metal. In the raw blast of *Eyeless* Corey Taylor screams: *"Insane – Am I the only muthafucker with a brain?/I'm hearing voices but all they do is complain/How many times have you wanted to kill/ Everything and everyone – Say you'll do it but never will/You can't see California without Marlon Brando's eyes/I am my Father's son/He's a phantom, a mystery and that leaves me/Nothing!/How many times have you wanted to die?/ It's too late for me/All you have to do is get rid of me!"*

The song was inspired by the schizophrenic ravings of a street dweller that the band met in New York when they were visiting the offices of Roadrunner Records to sign their recording contract.

According to Mick Thomson: "He was running around, screaming it at everyone. Though I think his choice of actor was pretty cool. He was off his shit."

In the more defiant *Surfacing*, Corey sings the lyric: "Fuck it all/ Fuck this world/Fuck everything that you stand for/Don't belong/Don't exist/Don't give a shit/Don't ever judge me."

But the truly terrifying *Scissors*, an unconnected, rambling stream of consciousness evocative of a deranged killer, was the album's 'money shot', the equivalent of Linda Blair's 360 degree headspin in *The Exorcist* or the chest-burster in *Alien*: *"I play doctor for five minutes flat/ Before I cut my heart open and let the air out/Three bugs, a pound of dust/ Some wind spilled before me In the strangest manner that had/Broke away my tear spout".*

It may have sounded like horror comic stuff to some critics, but there was a basis in the very real human pain that some of the band's members had suffered. Rumours of child abuse, suicide attempts and a mania for self-slashing added to the band's mystique.

In an interview with *Metal Hammer* at the time, Joey Jordison said: "You stick nine guys together who have had no outlet for their whole lives, and you live in Iowa and you come out on a fucking stage, then you have some shit to portray. We were walking around like ghosts, slitting our wrists open saying, 'Please take a look at this, look at what we are trying to do'. When we put it together and came to doing a live show all the elements of being downgraded, not appreciated, being given nothing because we live in such a shithole, all that came out. There is no way you can go through life thinking everything is great because it's not. Look at all the fucked-up shit that goes on. The world is a sick fucking place. The fact is you can come to our show and get all your aggressions out and go away feeling relieved. I want everyone to get a rush of emotion from it."

The band's self-titled debut album was the most successful record Roadrunner ever had, with only Coal Chamber coming close. The rapid success of the album owed a lot to the rather shrewd decision to buy Slipknot onto the opening slot of the 1999 Ozzfest tour. The band struck up a good relationship with Jack Osbourne, who had a hand in booking subsequent tours. Without the benefit of support from press, radio or MTV, the album became a cult item that went platinum within three months of release. This allowed them to obviously shock the shit out of the mainstream; the music and the image guaranteed fodder for the ban-it brigade in the wake of the Columbine shootings. But the first people to turn their noses up were not concerned Conservative Christians, it was the metal underground, who wrote them off as nu metal canon fodder.

Joey: "If you listen to a song like *Get This* from the digipack, or Surfacing or [sic] or even like fucking *Scissors*, the roots are death metal, thrash, speed metal, and I could go on and on about all those bands. I know all the songs, and I know every fucking label… the underground metal kids should also be happy because the current success of Slipknot, on songs like *Surfacing* and *[sic]* that have super-fast 16th-note double-bass – none of those fuckers in the other bands they lump us in with could contend with that." ✠

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THE NEW TESTAMENT

2000-2009

NEW MILLENNIUM, NEW SOUNDS, NEW SCENES: THE WHOLE WORLD WAS CHANGING AND METAL WAS CHANGING WITH IT.

Steve Harris, Nicko McBrain, Bruce Dickinson, Dave Murray, Janick Gers and Adrian Smith backstage at Chicago's UIC Pavillion during their Brave New World Tour, October 17, 2000

"HAVING THREE LEAD GUITARISTS GAVE US A DIFFERENT EDGE"

STEVE HARRIS

GETTY

HOW WE MADE BRAVE NEW WORLD

When Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith returned to Iron Maiden in 1999, the pressure was on the metal legends to deliver an album that could take them back to greatness

WORDS: DOM LAWSON

It might be hard to imagine now, but Iron Maiden were struggling at the end of the 1990s. Today, the UK's undisputed kings of heavy metal casually stalk the globe with vast, eye-busting stage productions, at the peak of their powers and more successful than ever. But after two good-but-not-great albums with vocalist Blaze Bayley, who replaced Bruce Dickinson back in 1994, Maiden were visibly battling the law of diminishing returns, playing in smaller venues to smaller crowds in many parts of the world; their status as metal's unassailable standard bearers was now in question.

But in 1999, the news that Blaze was gone and Bruce and guitarist Adrian Smith (who had quit Maiden in 1990) were to return to the fold sent the band's global army of fans into a state of wide-eyed hysteria. A new, six-man Maiden (Bruce, bassist Steve Harris, drummer Nicko McBrain and the newly named 'Three Amigos': guitarists Dave Murray, Janick Gers and the returning Smith) announced that they were to tour the US and Europe and *then*, most excitingly, make a brand-new studio album.

"From the moment we started the songwriting process, we saw the tour as being just a small blip on the way to making this record," Bruce told *Hammer*'s Clay Marshall in 2000. "[It was] something to cheer us up. The tour, in many ways, was the beginning of the campaign for this album. It started the ball rolling. It started winding people up. People realised, 'If they can still do this live, can they still make a great record together?' It posed a question, and [prompted] a great deal of discussion."

The Ed Hunter tour kicked off in the US on July 11, 1999, continuing for 31 dates that noisily confirmed Iron Maiden were back to reclaim their throne. It ended on October 1 in Athens, at which point the band were in the thick of writing and recording the album that would either put them back at the top of the metal tree… or not. No pressure, then, for producer Kevin Shirley, who had mixed feelings about being offered the job of facilitating such an iconic band's comeback.

"To be honest, when I got the call I was less enthusiastic than I should have been, because it appeared to me that they were a band that had maybe lost their way," he recalls. "I was concerned because I'd had a look at where they'd been and the trajectory of the albums. It seemed like there was a pattern emerging and it didn't look good. So I was apprehensive about it."

He needn't have worried, of course. If one thing has characterised Iron Maiden's four-decade reign, it is a steely determination to *never* let the fans down. Combined with the kind of confidence that only comes when you know you're the best, Maiden arrived at Guillaume Tell studios – a converted movie theatre in Paris, a brisk stroll away from the Champs-Elysées – with

To be honest we really dig a lot of the Blaze-era stuff, but, you know...

GETTY

an abundance of musical ideas and a shared desire to make the best record possible. In a sense, it must have felt like business as usual for Steve Harris, Bruce and the others. But as far as their new producer was concerned, a new era demanded a fresh approach.

"Obviously I grew up with the old-school recording methods, where you'd record the drums first, then the bass and the guitars, and it took forever," Kevin explains. "But I could see how there was this intangible *energy* you'd get, just from having musicians playing *together*. So I was dead keen on Maiden doing that. Steve, in particular, was very hesitant about it. He said he didn't think it was gonna work, so I said, 'If it doesn't work then we'll go back and do it as you've done previously, but let's give it a try!' Pretty much, as soon as they'd done one or two run-throughs, he said, 'I never want to work another way again!'"

"There was always gonna be a different edge to a certain degree anyway, with the fact we have three lead guitarists [now]," Steve Harris noted in 2000. "That in itself, I would've thought wasn't going to be an easy thing to handle, but Kevin handled it brilliantly. I do think he has given us an edge because it is just working with someone new and someone who is very positive, and he has a great vibe about him. The studio is not my favourite place to be. I would rather be onstage, so to be able to say I enjoyed it is important and to work with the right people is important."

With their working methods refreshed, attention turned to the album itself. With countless ideas and half-finished songs flying around between Maiden's numerous songwriters, finding enough material for a new album was never going to be difficult. What was more potentially problematic was how the songwriting credits were going to be divided up, but any fears that the newly convened Maiden line-up would end up bickering were soon dispelled. Maybe due to simply maturing as people or because this was too good an opportunity to fuck up with ego battles, Iron Maiden were a firmly united front.

"The first thing that has to happen, and which *did* happen, was everybody was pretty cool and laidback about getting their songs on or not getting their songs on," remarked Bruce. "Everybody was aware that everybody had to have a bit of give and take. We were reading off the same script."

"People brought in different ideas and I guess Steve had the bulk of them," Kevin notes. "He really is the keystone in that organisation – every song goes through Steve, and especially back then, with the reforming of that line-up. Over the last 20 years and the last five or six albums that we've done, it's evolved a little since then, and it's become a lot more collaborative. But they needed to have that one solid anchor and that was Steve."

With their bass-playing general guiding the ship, Maiden duly conjured some of the strongest songs of their career. Listening back to *Brave New World* nearly 20 years on, you can hear the excitement in the air as Maiden bashed anthems and epics out in the Paris shadows. Armed with both short, sharp singalongs such as explosive opener *The Wicker Man* and the rampaging *The Mercenary*, plus towering, elaborate epics like *The Nomad*, the Maiden sound was receiving a subtle but significant upgrade.

"It was a band finding their feet in the studio again, finding that natural chemistry," says Kevin. "Maiden is just *different* – you can't change Maiden. I tried to introduce new elements, like the orchestra in *Blood Brothers*, to give things a very grand feel. But you can't say, 'Look, I think gallops are passé! Let's go with something else…' because that's what Maiden *is*. They come in with a ready-built identity and you can't fuck with it. It would be irresponsible to fuck with it, for one thing, and why would you want to?"

Preceded by a single, *The Wicker Man*, that emerged three weeks prior, *Brave New World* was released on May 29, 2000. As their world tour loomed, Maiden would have been delighted to note that the album received almost universal praise from the rock and metal press,

With Adrian and Bruce back in the fold, world domination was inevitable

with only a few bemused mainstream hacks questioning the validity of this return-to-glory. Most importantly, the fans absolutely fucking loved it, sending the album into the upper echelons of charts around the world and swiftly obliterating the sales figures for previous album *Virtual XI* in the process.

The band's subsequent tour saw them return to the kind of venues and events they'd called home during their 80s heyday: Earl's Court in London, Madison Square Gardens in New York and, in January 2001, a show at Rock In Rio in Brazil, in front of 250,000 people. As comebacks go, *Brave New World* was an absolute monster. And they've barely paused for breath since.

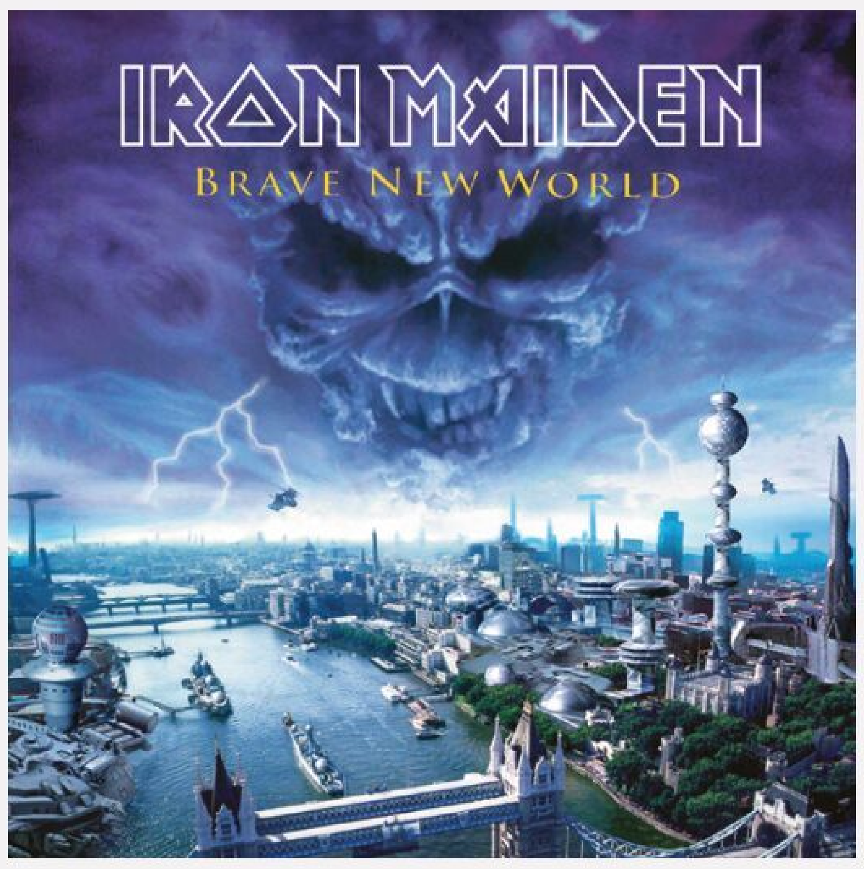
"As Bruce has pointed out on more than one occasion, those guys pay me a lot of money, so I always want them to be as successful as they can be," states Kevin. "But success and chart placement aren't important. For me, it's been about seeing the evolution. They were a band that were really on their knees when we went into record *Brave New World*. It's great to see them out there now, with the jets flying around and the crazy stage productions… it's all just brilliant."

"Maiden is the best heavy metal band in the world," Bruce concluded, not unreasonably. "The musicianship within the band is so scarily good. People don't even realise how good the players are in Maiden. That's why it's possible for us to do it. Also, in our hearts, none of us are satisfied with second-best. We're not sad old fuckers getting back together to go and make a few bucks. If something's worth doing, you've got to do it 100%."

"YOU CAN'T TELL MAIDEN THAT GALLOPS ARE PASSÉ!"
KEVIN SHIRLEY, PRODUCER

BRAVE NEW WORLD DISSECTED

Three choice cuts from Maiden's triumphant return



THE HIT
The Wicker Man
The first thing we heard from post-millennial Maiden. A thunderous eruption of pagan positivity and communal righteousness, it wasn't directly inspired by the classic British horror movie of the same name, but it does go up like a policeman on a bonfire. It went Top 10 in the UK, and straight to Number 1 in Greece. Well done, Greece!

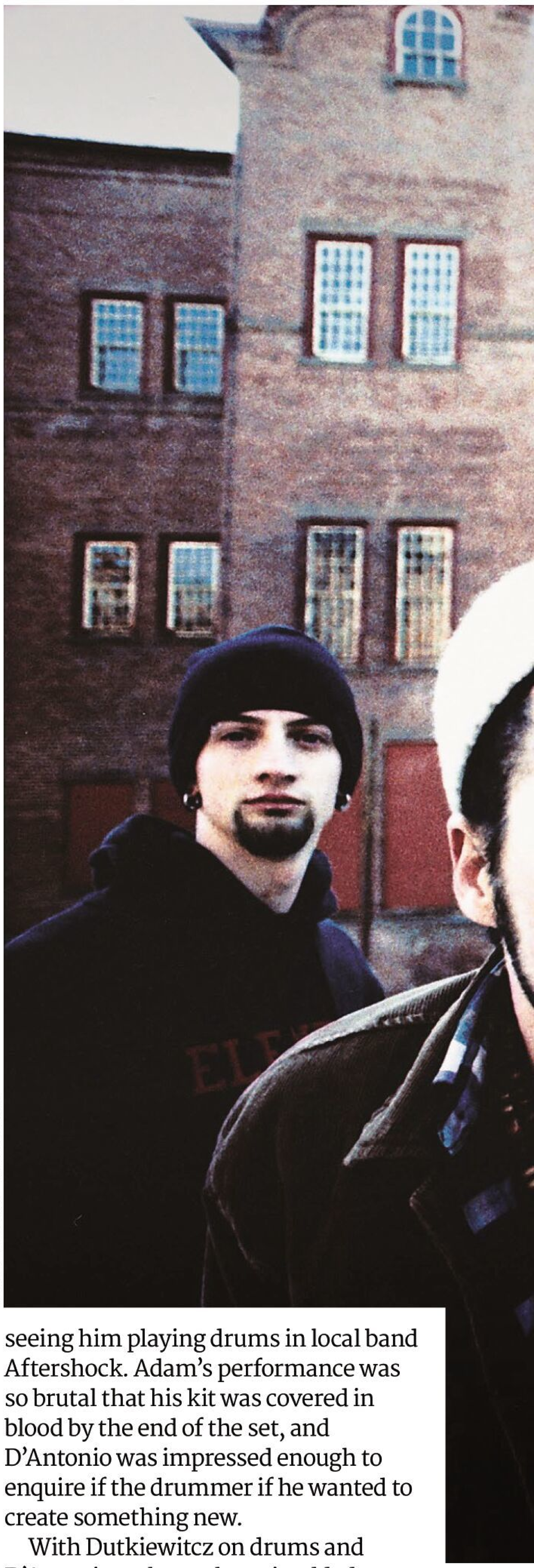
THE CLASSIC
Blood Brothers
On an album dominated by grandiose epics, *Blood Brothers* stood out as a singular and emotionally potent statement. Gracefully embellished with Kevin Shirley's orchestral arrangements, Steve's poignant ruminations on the state of the world and thoughts of his late father explode into a chorus that unites vast, boozy crowds like no other.

THE WILD CARD
Dream Of Mirrors
Maiden have been masters of the longform song since the beginning, but *Brave New World*'s longest song saw them flexing new creative muscles. Blessed with some of Steve Harris's most unsettling lyrics, this sprawling paean to the restless subconscious paved the way for two decades of fascinating musical evolution. The dream, as Bruce elegantly points out, is true.

THE REBIRTH OF NOISE

At the turn of the millennium, nu metal still ruled. But a bunch of metal and hardcore loving kids from the Massachusetts scene were plotting a change. And leading this metalcore revolution were Killswitch Engage.

WORDS: STEPHEN HILL



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Although metal may have hit a commercial highpoint at the turn of the millennium, not everyone was impressed by the state of the scene. The gargantuan success of the likes of Limp Bizkit and Linkin Park alienated more traditionally-minded metal values. As an endless revolving door of chancers with wacky hair and dyed goatees, wielding seven stringed guitars and pumped full of suburban angst diluted alternative music further and further, it was clear that something needed to change.

"I remember being confused by the nu metal genre," says Adam Duckiewicz, giutarist with metalcore pioneers Killswitch Engage. "Not much guitar playing, silly lyrics and mouth noises, with a lack of blast beats."

Salvation was found in an unlikley place; namely a bunch of punk kids from various satellite districts of Massachusetts. This is how Killswitch Engage and the early metalcore scene saved metal from itself.

By late 1997 Boston hardcore band Overcast, featuring future Shadows Fall frontman Brian Fair and Killswitch Engage members and Mike D'Antonio, had released two full length records and picked up a sizable following in the local scene. But D'Antonio was feeling frustrated by what they saw as a staunchly conservative set of values within the hardcore scene.

"We were a hardcore band that didn't want to be called metal," says D'Antonio of his time in Overcast, "but we were playing metal riffs. That was how we got our sound, we just kept pushing that envelope."

Overcast disbanded after a two-month tour characterised by apathy and tiny audiences. "It was like a chocolate and peanut butter scene back then," recalls Brian Fair. "Hardcore very much wanted to keep metal out of its sound. We realised it wasn't really going anywhere."

Despite the setback, D'Antonio couldn't lose the bug for playing music, and approached Dutkiewitcz after seeing him playing drums in local band Aftershock. Adam's performance was so brutal that his kit was covered in blood by the end of the set, and D'Antonio was impressed enough to enquire if the drummer if he wanted to create something new.

Adam D: the masked marauder.

With Dutkiewitcz on drums and D'Antonio on bass, the pair added guitarist Joel Stroetzel and vocalist Jesse Leach, and Killswitch Engage were born. Taking inspiration from the sound of classic hardcore, plus the thrash of Slayer and early Metallica and the melodic leads mixed with extreme savagery of Gothenburg pioneers such as At The Gates to great effect.

After playing their first ever show alongside Swedish melo-death legends In Flames, KSE began to pick up a dedicated local following, and their self-titled debut album was released on Ferret Records. Although it didn't come close to making a dent beyond the underground scene, the buzz

Killswitch Engage in 2002: original frontman Jesse Leach, second left.

surrounding was enough for bigger labels, such as Roadrunner Records, the home of Slipknot, Machine Head and more, to come sniffing around the young band. Due to their punk rock background and staunchly DIY ethics, the band were initially sceptical.

"Just being aware of how trends come and go meant that we were questioning their motives," Jesse told Loudwire in 2016. "What's the angle here? What are you looking to recreate? There was definitely a bit of that, but we stuck to our guns and made *Alive Or Just Breathing*."

After signing to Roadrunner, Killswitch Engage entered the studio with producer Andy Sneap in late 2001 to record their second record, and walked out with one of the most significant albums of the decade.

Released on the 21st of February 2002, *Alive Or Just Breathing* immediately struck a chord with disenfranchised fans of heavy music. Partly due to a brilliant marketing campaign where the band and Roadrunner held a funeral to 'bury' nu-metal, complete with a coffin filled with paraphernalia such as wallet chains, a Slipknot mask, a red baseball cap and baggy trousers, but mostly due to the perfect meld of technical metallic riffs, skyscraper choruses and punk rock grit.

The band's first single, the now-anthemic *My Last Serenade*, quickly became a staple of *MTV's Headbangers Ball* and rock clubs the world over. Immediately the buzz regarding this hot new sound, christened metalcore, led to an interest in who else was stylistically comparable to Killswitch. Suddenly friends and contemporaries such as Shadows Fall (also formed from the ashes of Overcast and Afteshock), God Forbid, Unearth and more were being touted as metal's next big thing.

"They were the superstar, supergroup band," Unearth guitarist Ken Susi says on Killswitch documentary *(Set This) World Ablaze.* "We all just followed their lead."

"I WAS CONFUSED BY THE SILLY VOCAL NOISES OF NU METAL"
ADAM DUCKIEWICZ

What seemed like an unstoppable rise to metal superstardom was then thrown into chaos, when Leach quit the band via email to D'Antonio halfway through the band's first ever national tour.

"After three years of hanging out with the dude, and considering him a brother, to just get an email was a little bit harsh." the bassist told *Blabbermouth*.

Jesse had his own reasons. He had got married only two weeks prior to heading out on the road, and, missing his family and suffering a deterioration of his mental health, felt he could no longer continue.

"There was something wrong with my head," Jesse told *Metal Hammer* in 2013. "Just sort of not being mentally prepared for life on the road. In your head, as a kid, it's one thing but when you actually get out there it's a whole other thing. I was having trouble with my voice and how to use it properly, I was struggling to maintain it, I wasn't hanging out with the band because I was just so worried about conserving the voice I had, I wasn't drinking, I just wasn't participating in any of the fun aspects of being out on tour. Going out and seeing things, being sociable, having a few drinks, I did none of that and it just ended up driving my head into some really dark places to the point where I was apathetic to the band and apathetic to what I was doing.

"I was just a young punk kid and I didn't know myself."

Still, this left Killswitch Engage in a quandary. With the spotlight on them they needed to act quickly to keep the momentum that *Alive Or Just Breathing* had given them continuing upward trajectory. Auditions were immediately put in place to find Jesse's replacement, with the band eventually hiring former Blood Has Been Shed vocalist Howard Jones. With Dutkiewicz moving to guitar to accommodate new drummer Tom Gomes, the new look KSE headed out immediately on tour around the world, alongside the likes of Soilwork, Kittie, Hypocrisy and Chimaira.

"SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH MY HEAD"

JESSE LEACH ON HIS INITIAL DEPARTURE FROM KILLSWICTH

One of the landmark moments for the band was the 2002 Roadrunner Roadrage tour, alongside 36 Crazyfists and Five Point 0.

"It was our first time in Europe, so we were expecting poorly attended shows with fans that needed to be won over," says Adam. "it went way better than expected. And Howard was still new in the band, so there was also a bit of nervousness with that."

They need not have worried. The new singer slotted in perfectly. With Howard upfront, Killswitch were rapidly building a reputation as a world class live band.

"We gained a lot of chemistry just from being out on the road so long," Howard told Terrorvlag when asked about how quickly he fitted into the Killswitch dynamic at that time. "we played a lot of shows in that year. And, for us, there just seemed to be this click when we got together, it seemed to work out really well."

It certainly did. With extensive touring for *Alive Of Just Breathing* coming to an end and the group appointing Justin Foley on drums, the band re-entered the studio to self-produce their first record fronted by Jones.

Despite the pressure of having to follow up a hugely successful breakthrough record, to continue to compete as leaders of a scene that was now starting to pick up some serious commercial traction, and introduce a new singer to their ever swelling fanbase, Killswitch recorded what would become the most successful album of their career.

The End Of Heartache was released on May 11, 2004, peaking at Number 21 in the US Billboard top 200 and winning the best album award at the 2004 *Metal Hammer* Golden Gods Awards, while the title track was nominated for the coveted Best Metal Performance Grammy in 2005. Suddenly the idea

Meet the new guy: with Jesse Leach's replacement Howard Jones (centre)

CUTOUT: PRESS MAIN: GETTY

Killswitch onstage in the early '00s: a world class live band.

that you could have a hit album playing geniunely heavy, traditionally inspired metal, free of the gimmicks of the rapidly fading nu metal scene, was no longer a ridiculous idea.

"People are starting to create that thrash metal, old school sound again," D'Antonio told musicomh.com soon after the album's release. "I don't want to say 'mainstream,' but it's definitely becoming more popular again. It's nice to see, I've always been a fan of the riffing, old school, metal kind of stuff."

With the door kicked in by Killswitch, an entire generation of bands were doing exactly that, no longer was metalcore the preserve of a small group of Massachusetts based punks. Now it was repackaged as 'The New Wave Of American Heavy Metal,' and the likes of Lamb Of God, As I Lay Dying, Trivium and more were seeing serious returns on the groundwork that KSE laid down. And it wasn't just in the US, from Parkway Drive in Byron Bay, Australia to Bullet For My Valentine in Bridgend, Wales, metalcore was the dominant sound of mid-00's metal.

"I remember being on Ozzfest with Shadows Fall, thinking 'Wow, we're all from the same area, grew up with each other, and here we are on one of the biggest metal festivals in the world,'" says Adam. "It was surreal."

Much of the success of *The End Of Heartache* was down to the more emotionally heartfelt lyrics and soaring melodies that Jones brought to the band, particularly on songs like the title track.

"Howard's such a great melodic singer," Adam explains. "I think it may have given us the opportunity to introduce it into our music a bit more. We've always liked melody, so melodic vocals were always something that we were interested in doing."

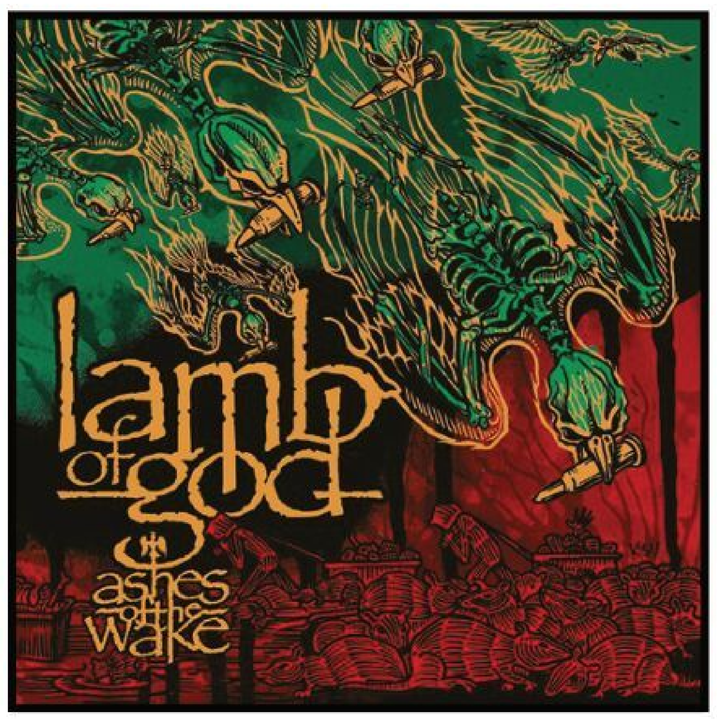
Howard's influence, not only on KSE, but on the entire metalcore scene cannot be understated. Over the intervening years this level of melody began to take over the sound of metalcore, arguably to its detriment. By the end of the decade the metalcore bands that *The End Of Heartache* had inspired were as formulaic and mainstream as the nu metal that Killswitch Engage themselves had helped kill off.

"There will always be people in bands who care more about haircuts and clothing than guitar solos and blast beats." Adam diplomatically shrugs when asked about the aftermath of their success.

Even Killswitch found themselves struggling to adequately follow up their early promised, and the band that were tipped as future festival headliners started to see interest dwindle, much like the metalcore scene itself.

It took the departure of Jones and the band's emotional reunion with Jesse Leach in 2012 to give the band a much-needed shot in the arm.

Today, it feels like Killswitch Engage are on the road back to former heights. But, even if they don't surpass or match them, credit needs to be given to them for being one of the most influential metal bands of the millenniumn – the band that blended hardcore punk and classic metal riffs and turned it into the dominant genre of the era.



THE STORY BEHIND

LAID TO REST
LAMB OF GOD

The 2004 anthem that gave Lamb Of God a breakthrough single and ushered in a new wave of American metal.

WORDS: STEPHEN HILL

GETTY

AT THE START of the millennium, metal was changing shape. The nu metal era was about to be put out of its misery, and the rise of more traditional-sounding metal was starting to form in the underground. "There was a real feeling of camaraderie between a lot of bands from that era," says Lamb Of God vocalist Randy Blythe of the time. "We didn't necessarily sound like them, but we had all come through the punk scene and were playing metal. I guess you'd call it the start of metalcore. So it was a really cool community."

"We went out on the Headbangers Ball tour in 2003," guitarist Mark Morton remembers. "It was us, Killswitch Engage, Unearth, Shadows Fall and God Forbid. We would even swap the bill around every night, because at that point all of us were in very similar positions in our career; there was no real stand-out 'huge' band. It felt like we were all coming up together. There was the sense that something was happening, which was exciting."

What was happening was bigger than even the band themselves realised. With two albums under their belt and an ever-swelling fanbase, major labels began to circle around Lamb Of God and the scene around them, leading to the Virginians signing to Epic ahead of their imminent third record – to their own surprise.

"We all had day jobs; we'd go off on tour and come back and have to work in construction or whatever," Randy chuckles. "We decided that if we were going to take the band seriously then we needed to be able to really commit to it. There aren't many jobs that will go, 'Sure, take six months off and your job will be waiting for you when you get back.' So, we decided to go with Epic because the advance meant we could all quit our jobs. But the punk rocker in me did feel pretty weird about it. I was suspicious because it was so far away from where I came from. I thought we'd follow the Sex Pistols model – one album and out. We were this disgusting-sounding metal band, I never thought that it could last."

"I remember feeling an immense amount of pressure when we went to write and record *Ashes Of The Wake*," adds Mark, "because it was this new chapter for our career. And it's not enough to just do as well as you had done before on records like this; you can't stand still, you have to surpass your previous material."

THE FACTS

RELEASED:
2004

ALBUM:
Ashes Of The Wake

PERSONNEL:
Randy Blythe (vocals), Mark Morton (guitar), Willie Adler (guitar), John Campbell (bass), Chris Adler (drums)

HIGHEST CHART POSITION:
N/A

THE SONG THAT came to define the new Lamb Of God era, and open *Ashes Of The Wake*, was the monstrous *Laid To Rest* – a song that was built on Mark's new approach to songwriting at the time.

"I came in with the opening riff and it just built from there," Mark tells us. "But, in my head, I knew we had to try and do something that we hadn't done before. So that's when I started to experiment with melody. I thought that if we could have Randy do these really brutal vocals there was a way that you could infuse the guitar parts with a sense of melody. That's really why that song works: it's still as brutal as our older stuff, but it was catchy as well."

Randy, though, credits the lyrics, written by Mark, as one of the main reasons that the song struck a chord with metal fans so quickly.

"If you look at any of the really big Lamb Of God songs, the lyrics are usually written by Mark Morton," he says. "And I'll tell you why: he loves to stick a curse word in there! So, *Laid To Rest* has got a big *'Say who gives a FUCK!,' Redneck* is *'a MOTHERFUCKING invitation'* and there's *'Walk with me in HELL.'* Metal fans love to scream a curse word! I've lost count of the amount of people that have come up and screamed that in my face. It's like, 'Dude, I'm doing my grocery shopping.' and they're shouting *'Who gives a fuck!'* at me. I just want to say, for the record, I'm not giving you a motherfucking invitation to anything, Mark Morton is. So, go shout it at him!"

Despite its irresistible melody, stomping groove and quotable, profanity-ridden chorus, *Laid To Rest* wasn't initially a song that jumped out at either Mark or Randy as the hallmark anthem it has become over the years.

Lamb Of God (left to right): Willie Adler, John Campbell, Mark Morton, Chris Adler, Randy Blythe

"Is it the first song on the album?" Randy asks. "I genuinely can't remember the track listing off the top of my head. I don't really remember it particularly standing out from the other songs we were writing at the time."

"You write a bunch of songs and that was just one of them," Mark concurs. "In fact, I actually wanted *Hourglass* to open the album. I have to say that I've conceded that I got that one wrong now."

Mark also believes that, as much as *Laid To Rest* represented the start of something new for the band, it was the end of something as well. Namely, their more overtly political lyrical content.

"It was the time of war and the Bush administration," he says. "I think a lot of the themes that we covered on that record are still relevant today. I'm not sure they ever went away really but, actually, *Laid To Rest* is really a song about some personal stuff that I was going through at the time. It was cloaked in a lot of metaphor, so there's a duality to it, meaning people could interpret it to be about what was happening in the world at the time. It was quite soon after that Randy and I had a conversation where we decided that it would be the way for us to go: more personal and introspective.

"I'M DOING MY GROCERY SHOPPING AND FANS ARE SHOUTING AT ME"

RANDY BLYTHE

So, this is the time when we stepped off our soapbox, essentially."

ASHES OF THE Wake was released on August 31, 2004 and, with *Laid To Rest* as its opening track and lead single, turned Lamb Of God from underground heroes to true modern metal heavyweights. To this day it remains their biggest-selling album, with *Laid To Rest* still their most well-known single, racking up more than 43 million streams on Spotify.

"We were doing the Ozzfest in 2004 when the album was actually released, I believe," Randy says. "We were one of three non-rotating bands on the second stage along with Slipknot and Hatebreed. We were going out in front of crowds of tens of thousands of people all of a sudden, and they all knew the words to this song, and they ▶

Flip-flops are metal. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise

GETTY

"THE *GUITAR HERO* VERSION SOUNDED *TERRIBLE*"

RANDY BLYTHE

were going crazy. It was certainly an odd feeling; when I joined the band, I just wanted to play [iconic New York club] CBGB's. That was the height of my ambition, so this was a really unusual feeling."

Like many rock and metal acts of the time, the song was given a huge commercial shot in the arm due to its inclusion in the immensely popular *Guitar Hero* game series. Although it was a boost for record sales, Randy wasn't entirely happy with the song's inclusion.

"We went to Australia and had this amazing tour," He begins. "And one day we get invited down to our label's Australian offices to play the new *Guitar Hero*, because *Laid To Rest* was on it. We all thought that was pretty cool, so we head down there and put the song on, and I'm playing away… then the vocals come in. And I was like, 'Did they get the wrong song? Is this an outtake from the studio when I was drunk?' it sounded terrible! Turns out they had got a band to cover it to save on royalties, and the band sounded like Lamb Of God, but the vocalist was horrible! I was like, 'Dude! You should have called me and I'd have come down and recorded it for $100!' It's pretty ironic that so many people were turned on to our band by hearing that version of our song… and it isn't even us."

Regardless, the true version has more than stood the test of time. *Laid To Rest* has become a staple of the Lamb Of God back catalogue and one of the songs that has come to define a very specific period in their illustrious career.

"I don't know if it defines us," shrugs Randy. "But I know we still play it at every show. It moves around the setlist a lot, but it always gets played."

"I can't see us ever dropping it from the set," Mark adds. "I think people would be really bummed out if we did. It was a huge moment for us as a band: our first song on our first major label album. There are a few songs that we've written from back then where you go, 'Hmm, yeah, it's fine' but it hasn't really stood up to what we're doing now. I think we've continued to improve as a band, but that song still holds its own alongside the best of what we do now."

We're sure most heavy metal fans would agree with him. Fifteen years on from first hearing *Laid To Rest*, we still give a fuck.

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THE 10 ESSENTIAL SYMPHONIC METAL ALBUMS

Unleash the orchestra! From Blind Guardian and Symphony X to Nightwish and Within Tempation, these are the metal's most epic records.

BLIND GUARDIAN

Nightfall In Middle-Earth (1998)

Though they have much in common with power metal, German warhorses Blind Guardian also deserve a place on any roll call of symphonic metal's finest, thanks to the sheer scale of their songs.

Inspired by JRR Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings* prequel *The Silmarillion*, *…Middle-Earth* provides a banquet of medieval/folk, speed/power metal and Queen-esque vocal twists, complete with plot-explaining interludes.

RHAPSODY

Symphony Of Enchanted Lands (1998)

Italy's Rhapsody (later rebranded as Rhapsody Of Fire) never sounded better and few albums have attained a finer, cleaner blend of orchestral sounds and heavy metal. *Symphony Of Enchanted Lands* is equal parts *Conan The Barbarian* and *Last Night Of The Proms*, with all the grandiosity that implies. A belated, if inferior sequel was anointed by an appearance from fanboy Sir Christopher Lee.

HAGGARD

Awaking The Centuries (2000)

The name of Haggard may be unfamiliar to casual fans of symphonic metal but the Germans have existed since the 1990s, albeit in more death metal-style earlier incarnations.

While rivals tend to utilise keys for orchestral effect, Haggard prefer to keep it real, their line-up pretty much a revolving door of players, most of whom wield traditional medieval instruments as though they were weapons.

SYMPHONY X

V: The New Mythology Suite (2000)

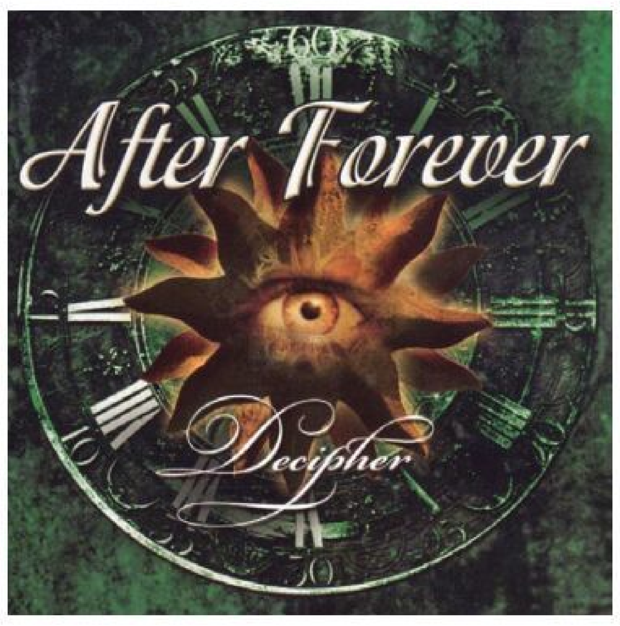
New Jersey's Symphony X have been blending sumptuous symphonic, neo-classical and power metal with prog for more than two decades to create some of the most striking and colourful music around.

A conceptual piece weaving together the story of Atlantis, ancient Egyptian mythology and astrological possibilities, their fifth album doffed its feathered cap at Verdi, Mozart and Bach among others.

THERION

Secret Of The Runes (2001)

Therion remain the original and – the purists would have you believe – best of all the symphonic metal acts. Named in honour of Celtic Frost's second album *To Mega Therion*, the Swedes have been led by multi-instrumentalist Christofer Johnsson since 1987. While others have prospered by 'sexing-up' the genre's principles, the Therion experience remains a pure one. Take our word for it: it's a beautiful thing.



AFTER FOREVER

Decipher (2001)

The second album from this pioneering and much-missed Dutch outfit, who ran from 1995 to 2009, *Decipher* employs live classical instruments and a full choir to complement the soprano of future Nightwish singer Floor Jansen.

Founding guitarist Mark Jansen (no relation) quit soon afterwards to form Epica, taking his growled co-vocals along with him. But 15 years on, this album's stirring arrangements and vast ambition still sound entirely masterful.

WITHIN TEMPTATION

The Silent Force (2004)

Three albums in, Holland's Within Temptation began to discard the doomier baggage of their early days, settling upon a uplifting symphonic style that was rendered all the more saleable by the voice and presence of frontwoman Sharon den Adel.

Later on they would infuse more gothic elements and even a regrettable dalliance with rapper Xzibit, though it's doubtful they'll write a better song than *Stand My Ground*.

KAMELOT

The Black Halo (2005)

Featuring cameos from Epica's Simone Simons and Stratovarius/Blackmore's Rainbow keysman Jens Johansson among others, *The Black Halo* was the seventh album from these American metal veterans.

The second of two conceptual pieces inspired by Goethe's *Faust*, it picked up where predecessor *Epica* had left off some two years earlier. Tracks such as *March Of Mephisto* and *The Haunting (Somewhere In Time)* remain among their very best.

NIGHTWISH

Dark Passion Play (2007)

Debate over the merits of the three female lead vocalists employed by Finland's Nightwish will most likely rage forever.

Dark Passion Play may feature their least popular singer, Anette Olzon, but it's their finest set of songs, her melodic approach being perfectly suited to its material. Indeed, from the rampaging *Bye Bye Beautiful*, which roasted ex-frontwoman Tarja Turunen, to the almost 14-minute *The Poet And The Pendulum*, it's near perfect.

EPICA

The Quantum Enigma (2014)

This long-running Dutch band has played a crucial part in the success of the symphonic metal movement via a string of consistently impressive releases, but with their sixth album Epica raised the bar to a whole different level, hiring a live chamber choir and a string orchestra to enhance a collection of tunes that is uniformly strong. Throw in a flame-haired mezzo-soprano by the name of Simone Simons and the results can justly be described as seismic.

Nightwish with former singer Anette Olzon: 'near perfect'.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT

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THE LEGENDS STILL LIVE, BUT A NEW GENERATION OF BANDS ARE LEADING METAL FORWARDS INTO THE FUTURE. THESE ARE THEIR STORIES.

CLAS OF THE TITA

On June 16, 2010, thrash metal's Big Four – Metallica. Slayer. Megadeth. Anthrax – shared a stage for the first time ever, creating the most immense live show. And we were there...

Words: Joel McIver Pics: Kevin Nixon

There is no more metal place to be on Earth than here, today, standing on the runway of a vast airport complex in Poland, with the light of dusk turning everything orange. Megadeth frontman and leader Dave Mustaine is standing next to us, his copper locks mirroring the sun's dying glow.

To a soundtrack of equal parts Slayer and the demented screams of the 81,000 people they're playing for, Megadave nudges *Hammer*, fixes his gaze on some curvaceous PR girls and murmurs, "Y'know, I said some stuff in the past, and I've tried to make amends for it – and here we are, with all the bands that I've had disagreements with. We're all lovey-dovey!" He shakes his head in disbelief and prowls off to chat with the ladies.

Megadeth's Chris Broderick takes no prisoners

Dave isn't the only one who can't believe what's happening. Twelve hours after *Hammer* left the UK and three after we arrived at the Sonisphere festival in the industrial outskirts of Warsaw, we can't quite get it into our heads that we're witnessing this stupendously important gig. As Scott Ian of Anthrax puts it, "I was sitting at a table with James [Hetfield] and Kirk [Hammett] last night. And James glances over and says: 'Oh look, there's Lars [Ulrich] boring the shit out of Dave.' Lars and Dave are just chatting away to each other. And I said, 'It's kind of weird for me to even see them talking to each other, because the last time I saw that, Dave was still in Metallica!' The energy was insane: we all kept saying to each other, 'Can you believe we're actually doing this?' It's really exciting..."

The scale of this thing is huge. There may only be a handful of dates Sonisphere successfully brought together the Big Four (the UK event at Knebworth features Rammstein and Iron Maiden), but there's a very real sense that history is being made.

After all, the Big Four Of Thrash, as they were labelled in the late 1980s, have spent the last 20-plus years enduring drugs, deaths, stints in rehab, lineup shuffles and enough spins of the cruel wheel of fashion to finish off lesser acts – and yet they're all here, older and mostly wiser, but with a renewed hunger that makes this show, their very first together, the only gig to see this year.

The atmosphere at the Polish Sonisphere is electric. Like medieval armies preparing for battle, the bands are staked out in two giant white tents. One of them belongs to Metallica, with a warm-up zone (the 'Tuning Room') attached; the other is shared by Slayer, Megadeth and Anthrax. There's no elitism here, though: all the bandmembers troop freely in and around each other's dressing rooms with only a modicum of security – probably because, unlike a UK or American event, there are very few PRs, fans, managers and other denizens lurking about backstage. Lurking near the free vodka stand, *Hammer* watches as the bands are whisked off in golf carts to the enormous stage, 200 metres away. It's fascinating to see the machinery of a massive show like this one in action.

Poland's very own death metal sensations Behemoth are opening the show, and frontman Nergal is obviously having trouble coming to terms with it. After his band's 30-minute set, he tells us: "What can I say? I'm blown away! We're honoured to be opening this show, especially in Poland. Usually stadium shows are tough for us, because we're not an arena band, but I think our set went really well." Has he met the stars of the show? "Yeah, Lars approached me – he was so friendly!" he nods. Asked if Behemoth received a planet-sized paycheque for their Sonisphere appearance, he says with great diplomacy: "We get a lot of satisfaction, ha ha! We would do it for free. Whatever happens in the future, we'll always be a band who played with Metallica."

Warmed up by Behemoth's monstrous music, the Polish crowd give Anthrax the full welcome, greeting the opening chords of *Caught In A Mosh* with ear-splitting enthusiasm. We're glad to see it, because this isn't any old gig for the New York veterans: it's nothing less than the start of a new era that could make or

Kirk says the Big Four tour was James's idea. Yet another reason to love Lord Hetfield

Anthrax's Rob Caggiano takes some time out, while *Hammer*'s Joel McIver chats to Scott Ian

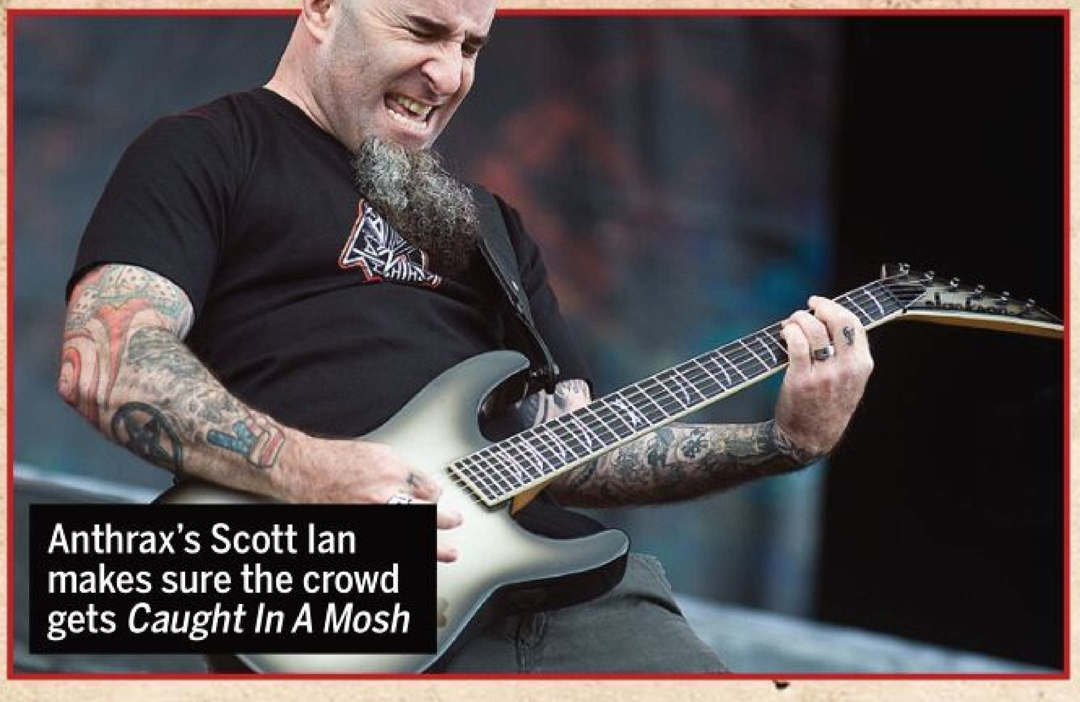
break them. After two years of chaos in which no one really knew who was singing for them, Anthrax have re-recruited their old frontman Joey Belladonna, who lent his expert wails to career-best albums such as *Spreading The Disease* and *Among The Living*. His reappearance seems to have rejuvenated the band, judging by today's set – a quick 45-minute sprint through the highlights of *Among*... and classics like their version of Joe Jackson's *Got The Time*. 'Thrax also deliver a few bars of *Heaven And Hell* in tribute to the late Ronnie James Dio, a nice touch which gets the crowd roaring with approval – even if the song *Only* gets a small number of fans shouting "John Bush" for a while.

"This is huge for me!" grins Joey backstage, who reveals that he spent two hours in the crowd before the set, meeting fans. Guitarist Scott Ian adds: "John ➤

Tom Araya of Slayer in fighting form

"IN 1988 THIS SHOW NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED. IN 1998 NO ONE GAVE A FUCK"

KIRK HAMMETT, METALLICA


Anthrax's Scott Ian makes sure the crowd gets *Caught In A Mosh*

Kirk Hammett adds *Fuel* to the fire

Bush decided that he didn't want to be in the band – any band. He decided that this life is just not for him any more. Knowing that the Big Four shows were coming, it seemed to make sense that Joey did them, because it's the lineup of the band that *should* be doing these shows. John just wasn't able to commit to doing this full-time, which kinda made up our minds for us: we were like, 'OK, let's see if Joey wants to do this.' We flew him down to New York and hung out for two days, and it definitely felt good."

Scott explains that the Sonisphere gigs represent a whole new chapter for Anthrax. "After last summer, when Dan Nelson walked, it really threw us into a downward spiral as a band: we'd never cancelled a tour before, for any reason. Nothing like that had happened in the history of this band. We were lucky enough that John came back and did the Knebworth Sonisphere and some gigs in Japan and Australia. I'd love to think that it was all meant to happen for a reason, and that Joey is back in the band to stay, and we're gonna make a record and continue with this lineup. That's what we all want to happen." Fingers crossed…

Chilling backstage, Dave Mustaine is ready for his set. Megadeth are on fire at the moment, as anyone who saw them at Download can testify, and the popularity of their 2009 album *Endgame* – Dave's most aggressive and technical in years – says much about the public's affection for thrash metal in 2010. Boosted by the re-recruitment of bassist David Ellefson, Megadeth are close to the peak of their powers – although Dave knows that he's screwed up, and screwed up badly, in the past. Chatting candidly to *Hammer*, he shrugs: "This is historic for plenty of reasons. There are so many happy people standing out there in the audience. There might be others who are saying, 'Fuck you Dave, I hate you.' But at the end of the concert it's like, 'You know what? I had a good time.' I'm not even the slightest bit concerned about the people who don't like me. I'm concerned about the people that do!"

Asked if he'd been uneasy opening for Slayer, a band of roughly equal stature to Megadeth, Dave explains: "No – I think that's because Slayer have been together for considerably longer, with less lineup changes." He adds, "This is really neat for me, because I'm the only one that's been in two of the bands. Last night we were having dinner and Lars and I sat at the same table and we were shooting the shit all night. James and I are friends. So many people are Metallica fans, and they're missing out on Megadeth because they think we don't get along. Megadeth make good music, so I really think they should give us a fair shot."

Dave Mustaine: a mane attraction

Judging by the Polish crowd's reaction, a lot of people are willing to do just that, with their appreciation for new 'Deth songs such as *Head Crusher* just as great as for classics like *Symphony Of Destruction*. Backstage, Kerry King of Slayer is listening to Megadeth's set while talking to *Hammer*, telling us: "I think Megadeth had a fuckin' great last record – those are great riffs! Metallica's making heavy fuckin' music too. Now is a good time for this tour."

Kerry, who Kirk Hammett later describes to us as "so fuckin' metal", did what he does best on arrival in Poland the previous night, arriving at the dinner organised by Metallica in party mood. "It felt pretty historic to me yesterday," he informs us. "It was awesome. I was sitting at the table with Shawn Drover from Megadeth and I looked up and said, 'Dude, there's a lot of famous fuckin' people here!' The first guy I saw was Ellefson, then I was hanging out with Kirk and Scott, and then I had Shawn and Chris [Broderick] from Megadeth with me for most of the night – and then me and Kirk started doing shots, and it escalated from there. It was a fuckin' blast!"

If anyone could realistically outplay the headliners tonight, you'd have to nominate Slayer, whose hour-long set is mesmerising. "I put together a brutal set," promises Kerry beforehand, and indeed the LA quartet's warp-speed dash through the classics (*Angel Of Death, Chemical Warfare* and the apocalyptic set-closer *Raining Blood*) and new material (*Jihad, World Painted Blood*) is worth coming a long way to see. Slayer epitomise metal, right down to their old-school musical preferences: as Kerry tells us, "I saw a poster in town saying that Venom's playing here soon – and I was like, 'Fuck! Why couldn't they play on this thing?'"

And so to Metallica, the biggest heavy metal band there has ever been or, indeed, there is ever likely to be. The four support acts have done their stuff and retired to their tour buses, as the long drive to the next Sonisphere in Switzerland prevents much backstage debauchery. The scene is set, the sun has gone down, and oh God, is that the beginning of *The Ecstasy Of Gold*? With 81,000 people bellowing the M-word, we slam our vodka and run to the front of the stage…

"SLAYERRRGGHHHHH!" to the power of 81,000

OH YES THEY WILL… OH NO THEY WON'T! THE ROCKY ROAD TO THE BIG FOUR SHOWS.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2009
Kerry King tells *Hammer*'s bespectacled web monkey Terry Bezer that a Big Four tour might happen. Metalheads of the world get an instant boner/wide-on in excitement.

SEPTEMBER 15, 2009
Lars Ulrich is all vague about it, saying, "I think it would be a super-fun thing to do… But right now it's not something that's like hush-hush being worked on behind the scenes, or anything like that." The metalheads' boners reduce to semis.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2009
Robert Trujillo declares: "Nothing's concrete. It's not a sealed deal. We're working on it… We've had a few different conversations on the subject. I'm friends with Kerry King and had dinner with him a few months back, and it came up there." We get 'upstanding' again.

OCTOBER 16, 2009
Kirk Hammett says, "That tour is not gonna happen… We've all been hearing that for a while. I get asked [about] it regularly. As far as a tour going on, it's not gonna happen. Conflicting schedules, conflicting personalities, [a lot of] conflicting things. It's a good idea, though. And personally, I can see the significance of playing a tour like that, but… it's not gonna happen." We 'lose wood' completely.

DECEMBER 14, 2009
Out of the blue, Metallica break the news that Big Four dates are on their way: "You've been posting and chatting about it for months, and we're here now to confirm it… Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth and Anthrax will all share the same stage for the first time EVER!" As Lars summarised: "Thrash metal's Big Four… what a mindfuck! Bring it on!" Zips pop worldwide…

The most awesome left to right in the history of left to rights: Dave Lombardo, Rob Trujillo, Jeff Hanneman, Tom Araya, Charlie Benante, Joey Belladonna, Dave Mustaine, David Ellefson, Chris Broderick, Scott Ian, Rob Caggiano, Kerry King, James Hetfield, Shawn Drover, Frank Bello, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett

"You know something?" Kirk Hammett told *Hammer* earlier that afternoon. "In 1988 this show never would have happened, for whatever reason. In 1998 no one gave a fuck, and now in 2010 it's big fuckin' news. God fuckin' bless it! It was initially James's idea. He just wondered one day how great it would be if the Big Four toured together, and we all kinda scratched our heads in agreement and were all like, 'Yeah, that would be very, very cool.'"

Talking about the previous night's get-together, Kirk says: "It was at an Italian restaurant here in Warsaw, and everyone was hanging out until one or two in the morning. We were all very happy to be here: the main topic was how great it was that we were able to pull this off, and how great it was to be still standing 25 years after the fact. We were just bouncing around and catching up. It was just the bands – no girlfriends or managers. It was hilarious, because it could easily have been 1985: we have a lot less hair but a lot more experience!"

The question we had to ask – about whether the bad blood that has existed between some of the musicians for decades is still causing resentment – didn't take Kirk by surprise. "I'm a man of integrity and sincerity, and I believe in karma," he told us, "and I don't let anything like that bother me. There are more important things in life, and I don't let myself get all riled up about who said whatever. I have a pretty good concept of myself, so I never let any of that shit fuckin' bother me at all. You'll never see me replying to any bullshit, I've never bothered. I don't have time for any of that fuckin' crap. We all collectively know that that was the past, and this is now, and what is happening is what is happening. This is the show to see for metal fans."

Kerry King oozes metal in any setting

This view seems to be shared by the vast audience tonight: when the unmistakable opening chords of *Creeping Death* hit the crowd, accompanied by 20-foot pyro eruptions, the idea of being anywhere else at this precise moment is unthinkable. The 15 songs in the main set come from the earliest days of thrash metal – *The Four Horsemen* and *Master Of Puppets* among them – via Metallica's MTV-dominating early 90s (*Sad But True* sounds vast), but the band skip lightly over the *Load*, *Reload* and *St Anger* era, with only *Fuel* representing those "sideways journeys" as Kirk refers to them in our interview. Three *Death Magnetic* songs bring the set up to date, but the encores seal the deal: Metallica's 1990 cover of Queen's *Stone Cold Crazy*, followed by their first ever song, *Hit The Lights*, and the quintessential thrash anthem, *Seek And Destroy*. It's a breathtaking spectacle.

Joey Belladonna: thrilled to be back in the 'Thrax

"I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN IN TWO OF THE BANDS! IT'S NEAT!"

DAVE MUSTAINE, MEGADETH

Metal Mecca

And maybe, just maybe, you'll be seeing it too. You're reading it here first: if this run is a success (and why wouldn't it be?), the Big Four shows may take place in other countries. Kirk tells us, "If this works out, and everyone has the time, there's no reason why we can't do this again in the future. This is basically the trial run." Kerry King adds, "I'm hoping this grows some big fuckin' legs and gets to Western Europe, the UK and the rest of the world. I told James last night, 'Dude, I think this is going to be such a big thing – hopefully we can take it everywhere'... If it all works out, I can't imagine why it wouldn't go everywhere else."

An interesting thing happens at the end of Metallica's set. After the final encore, the band are throwing drum-sticks and guitar picks into the crowd when some moron in the control booth sends a recorded message through the PA system. As a giant, disembodied voice talks to the crowd in Polish, James Hetfield barks into his microphone, "Shut the fuck up! We ain't finished yet!" The stadium erupts in applause.

He's right, too. Metallica aren't finished yet. Thrash metal is alive and well, and your life is better because of it.

18+

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AR INSIDE MY HEAD

"I grew up in foster homes. I wanted to be better than what I was given"

IVAN MOODY

In 2010, on their first ever *Metal Hammer* cover, FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH were at war. Their mission: to drag the metal scene into a new decade of aggression.

Words: Dayal Patterson. Pics: Travis Shinn & John McMurtrie.

"Fuuuuuuuuuuuck yoooooouuuuuuuu!" bellows an angry-looking man with a mohawk haircut, a teardrop tattoo under his eye, and a voice loud enough to wake the dead. As we're learning, Five Finger Death Punch vocalist Ivan Moody really likes to give his all when it comes to photoshoots. In fact, he's screaming into the camera with the same level of enthusiasm he exhibits at the band's riotous live performances. The only difference being that, rather than doing it in a hot venue surrounded by rabid fans, he's posing outside London's Imperial War Museum, in the freezing cold, with a number of confused tourists and a rather concerned-looking museum manager as his audience. Incredibly, considering all the commotion outside, the staff of the museum not only allow us into the building, but temporarily cordon off a couple of tanks for our benefit, even allowing Ivan to clamber around the formidable machines while our talented snapper fires off frames.

But then Ivan is a pretty likeable guy. And in a world where successful bands are increasingly likely to be fronted by a pretty boy with a daft haircut, he is also a welcome break from the norm. Built like a pitbull, he looks like the sort of fella who might knock your block off as soon as look at you, but sit him down and you'll find a warm, thoughtful and very open character.

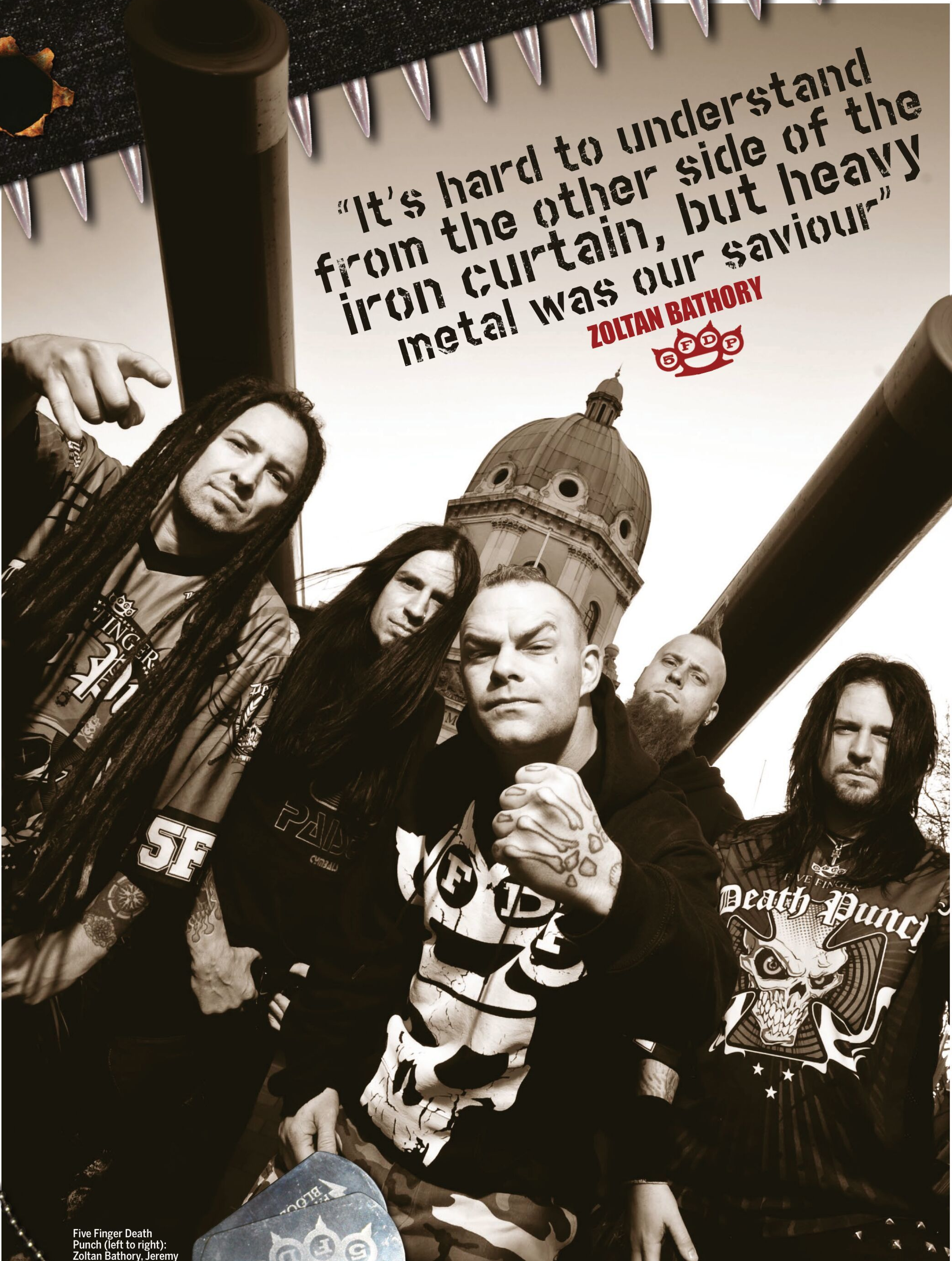
There's a lot of positivity in him, yet at the same time you can see in his eyes that he's weathered more than a few storms in his time, this sense of struggle only confirmed when conversation turns to his youth.

"From what my mother tells me I was a hellion," he begins with a mix of amusement and resignation. "I grew up in and out of a lot of foster homes, my mother was really stressed raising three kids by herself and I got to be a little bit too much for her, so she put me in foster care until I was about 18. I had a lack of self-awareness, not knowing who I was or where I came from, feeling abandoned a lot of the time. I was a handful and… I mean I'm not saying it was *bestowed* upon me, but when you go to school and everyone has their parents around them and they're all wearing new shoes, while I was wearing second-hand shoes and didn't have the same things around me, it was a little bit harder. So I rebelled that little bit harder."

Though these were certainly not easy years for the vocalist, there's little doubt they did much to build and define the character he has today, providing him with the drive and

“It’s hard to understand from the other side of the iron curtain, but heavy metal was our saviour”

ZOLTAN BATHORY



Five Finger Death Punch (left to right): Zoltan Bathory, Jeremy Spencer, Ivan Moody, Matt Snell, Jason Hook

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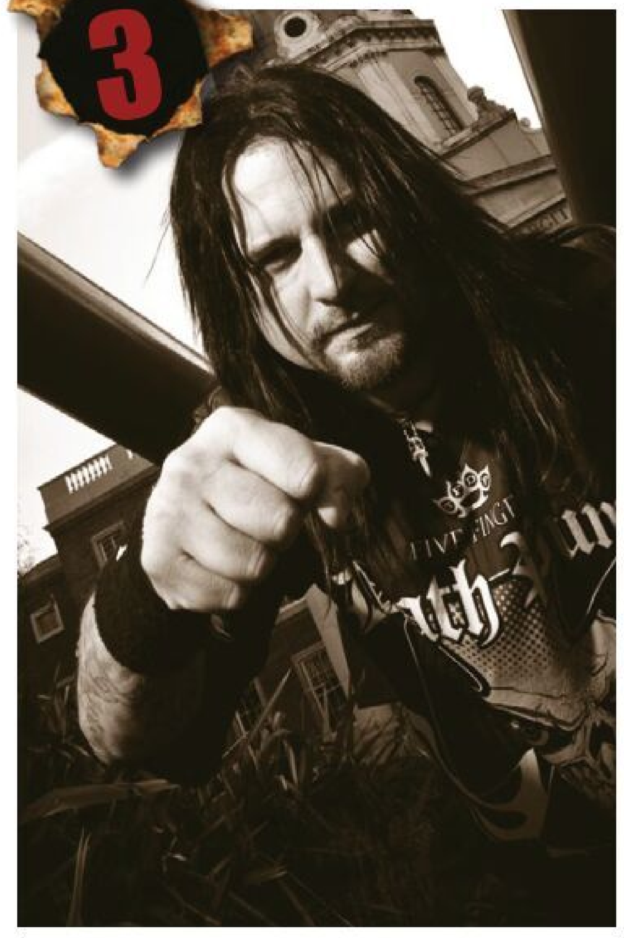
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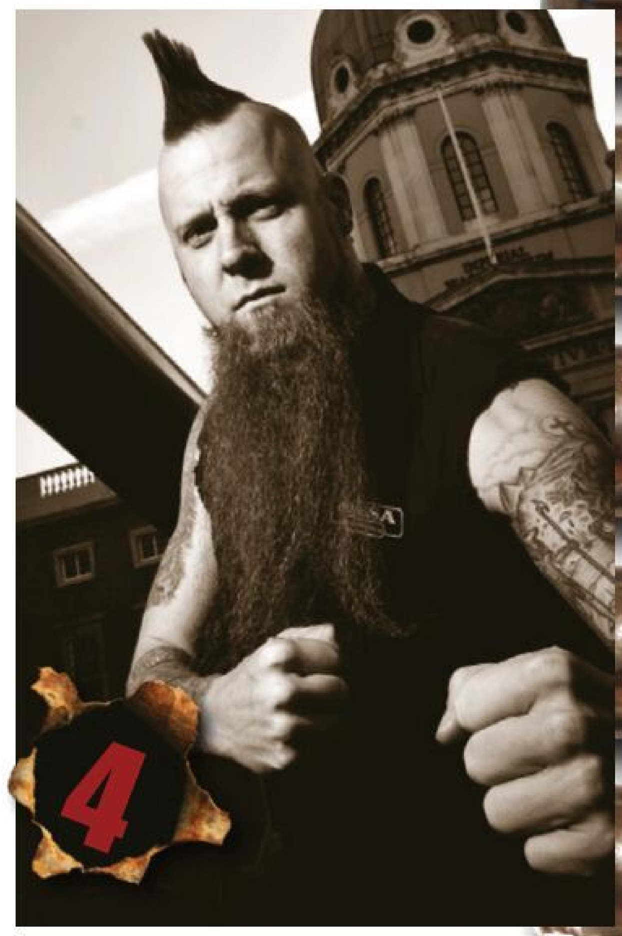
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ambition to better himself, whilst conversely forcing him to look beyond material possessions for fulfilment.

"I wanted to be bigger and better than what I was given," he sighs. "I saw countless family members strive just to make ends meet, eating pancakes or hotdogs every day. I just wanted more. I have a daughter and I want more for *her*, I don't want her to feel that *shame* that I felt.

"I felt so ashamed when I was dropped off at school. But [because] we didn't have a lot of money it was always about what you *did* and not what you were *given*."

It's an ethos that has certainly stuck with him, and is coupled with an almost childlike enthusiasm for life that seems to contrast with the more measured approach of his bandmates. When the group headed off for their first Japanese tour last August, for example, it was Ivan who turned up at the airport with little more than the clothes he stood up in and a toothbrush.

"The band were saying I was an idiot," he laughs. "But they were the ones having all their cases searched by customs. I've always been a kind of a gypsy. Living in foster homes, I learned to adapt. Material things… you know, possessions *do* possess. They will hold you and bind you. Too many people get lost in this, 'Do I have this? Do I have that?' I just wanted to get on the plane and go somewhere I hadn't been before. But I drive the others to be chaotic. I'm the anarchist. I give them a chance to be spirited and live a little. If they had a singer who was like Zoltan [Bathory 5FDP guitarist and bandleader], it would probably drive them into the ground."

With his get up and go spirit, it might seem that Ivan was always destined to be in a band. His first career choice was a rather different one, however, and it's something of a surprise to learn that in his younger years Ivan actually trained to be a Catholic priest. While this was largely due to the religious nature of his stepfather, the young Ivan, despite his rebellious ways, was actually quite happy to follow in the footsteps of his church's minister, a man he even describes as "his first idol".

"The way he talked to the crowd and secured them, comforted them, I think that was the first time I realised I wanted to be in front of people," he explains. "I wanted to tell my story. But I realised later that certain parts of the Bible didn't fit. And I'm not going to say I'm an atheist – I do believe in *something* – but I'm more into science than magic. And being self-educated, there are so many different religions in the world, I couldn't understand why you had to conform to only one, and be cast out by the others. I had to dig for answers – you get what you take, and I wasn't going to just sit back and be complacent."

Unfortunately, when Ivan finally found a musical role he could pour his energies into – fronting the nu metal band Motograter – he found the people he was working with doing just that. Though the group certainly achieved some success, most notably in 2003 when they played Ozzfest and appeared on the soundtrack to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* remake, Ivan still felt that other members of the band were not pushing hard enough.

"There was a hump we just couldn't get over," he ponders. "There were certain guys who just didn't *want* it; they were there for the women, the money, the quick fame, then they wanted to go home, they didn't really care. It was so obvious to me, when we were given the bigger gigs, the lack of concern, the way they treated their fanbase, I just knew in my soul they weren't ready for what I wanted. I wanted to be… not Marilyn Manson where you're separated from society altogether, but I didn't want to be that close… I don't know." He pauses. "I've always felt a little bit separated from humanity, I guess. The funny thing is [when it was over] my attorney explained to me that he wanted me to turn around and sue for the money lost, and I explained that if I did that I would never have another chance in this industry. And he said, 'Well, you can still be rich'. And I said, 'I'm not *here* to be rich, I want to play music.' It was never even a thought that I wasn't going to be back where I wanted to be; it was just a case of finding the right collective of people. Luckily I found Five Finger Death Punch."

Not that he wasn't looking elsewhere at the time, mind you. In fact, sitting at home in Colorado, searching for suitable bands via the internet, Ivan managed to line up interviews with no fewer than three bands he believed had a bright future, namely Adema, Spineshank and, of course, Five Finger Death Punch. Trying out with Spineshank first, it soon became apparent that he wasn't going to be happy filling the shoes of a departed vocalist and that it was important for him to be, as he puts it, "the original" singer of whatever group he committed to. Cancelling his audition with Adema for that reason, he travelled out to meet Five Finger, where he realised almost immediately that he had made the right decision.

"The moment I walked in the door there was such camaraderie, everybody seemed like they were on the same page," he smiles. "The guys were seasoned, they'd all been in different bands that had the same sort of success as Motograter and for whatever reason it fell apart. When you meet someone you can always tell, it's in the eyes, the character. Like Jeremy [Spencer], he's the nicest guy in the world but he's very serious about what he does; he takes drumming very seriously. Then you meet Zoltan who's obviously from Hungary, and he has a different mindset, he doesn't have that American arrogance, there's no ego, it's just, 'This is the way it is,' cut and dry. Then me and Matt [Snell, bassist], we're like brothers. So I don't want to say *fate*, but it seemed like I'd waited all these years, then here it was right in front of me."

It's obvious that the band's success has given the vocalist a sense of vindication, and a confirmation that the many years struggling in the music industry weren't in vain; something that obviously crossed the man's mind after the collapse of Motograter. Many people would have been so disheartened from such an experience that they gave up altogether, and got a job in The Real World. After all, getting a taste of success then seeing it fall away isn't easy for anyone, but particularly when you're of an age where family and responsibility are never too far away.

"It was a hard two-and-a-half years," he admits when asked about the period between the two bands. "You get depressed and start questioning, 'Am I made for this? Should I go back to college? Or get a job?' You *have* to question, when you spend so much time away from your daughter and you can't provide, you start to question, 'Why are we doing this?' Because I have full custody of her – her mother's never been around, kinda the opposite of what I grew up in – so I promised myself I'd be there for her. But you still have that beacon of light inside you which says, 'Don't give up.' Where I'm at now, I'm so glad I stuck to the path," he pauses before finishing the sentence, "'cos I don't think I'd be alive if I hadn't."

As he says himself, Ivan is the one in the band who brings a sense of anarchy to proceedings. But if he provides the madness, then in a sort of yin/yang twist, it is guitarist Zoltan Bathory who appears to provide the method. In fact, it is his careful planning and focussed approach that is responsible for the creation of Five Finger Death Punch in the first place. Growing up in communist Hungary, his youth was naturally very different to Ivan's, yet his character was shaped by his experiences in just as tangible a fashion. For Zoltan, heavy metal was one of the only ways to rebel against a very controlling system, and provided him with both a passion and, like many young people around the world, a sense of belonging. »

FRONT-LINERS

1 IVAN 'GHOST' MOODY

Contribution to Five Finger Death Punch: vocals
Previously worked with: Black Blood Orchestra, Motograter and Ghost Machine.
Has also: appeared in the movie *The Bled*, playing a vampire from another dimension called Incubus. No, really.

2 ZOLTAN BATHORY

Contribution to Five Finger Death Punch: rhythm guitar
Previously worked with: UPO (playing bass)
Has also: built up Five Finger from scratch and been reported missing by the band while on tour after a wild weekend in Las Vegas.

3 JASON HOOK

Contribution to Five Finger Death Punch: lead guitar
Previously worked with: Alice Cooper, Bulletboys and pop singers Hilary Duff and Mandy Moore.
Has also: released a solo album *Safety Dunce* and become Five Finger's newest member, replacing Darrell Roberts in January 2009.

4 MATT SNELL

Contribution to Five Finger Death Punch: bass, backing vocals
Previously worked with: Anubis Rising and Deadsett
Has also: got a very big beard and spent much of his life drag racing and tinkering with racing cars and sports bikes.

5 JEREMY SPENCER

Contribution to Five Finger Death Punch: drums
Previously worked with: WASP and a lot of bands you won't have heard of, thanks to his frequent session work.
Has also: created an extreme metal drum loop CD entitled *Hellacious Double Bass*.

GUNS N' POSES

Wondering where *Hammer* got the artillery for this month's gun-tastic cover? Well, when the call went out that we needed some large-bore boom-sticks, none other than 5FDP guitarist Zoltan Bathory himself got in touch to help. Note to selves: *Do not annoy Zoltan…*

"Guys, I'm bringing the M2 machine guns – they are massive – six foot-long cannons with all the details like the cooling holes – they look straight up savage. They are not extremely heavy so we can easily hold them. Nothing says better "you're getting fucked up" than a barrel of a .50 calibre; this thing was designed to take down airplanes.

"Also, I have a bunch of M16 machine-guns and 9mm pistols, I have black op ranger vests, the real deal – with bulletproof plates, a black op commando backpack, military edition fox hole shovel, and a bunch of other tactical stuff; enough shit that I could probably intimidate a small country.

"Clothing – I'll bring a suitcase of stuff so we can have various looks, military, special op, rangers etc. I even have some ninja shiznit. No worries! The shoot will look absolutely br00tal… ;)"

-Zoltan

THE ART OF WAR

THE CONCEPT BEHIND THE *WAR IS THE ANSWER* ALBUM ART.

"There's a guy with a gasmask, the oil drill behind, the money underprint," Zoltan explains. "If you look at the artwork, for most people the current conflict in the Middle East is going to come to mind. What you take it to mean is up to your individual perception. But the world – even when we are at peace – is at economic war. That's a capitalist system, look at global economy, a country cannot be rich if there are no poor countries. I never took a political stance, though. When you're in the military, there's no turning around and running, so I'm in awe, I have the utmost respect for those guys. If you're a soldier – the Iraqi soldier, the American soldier, or the English soldier – they take an oath, they don't necessarily even know *why*, but they will do what they sign up for. Mankind became the dominant species because we have been at war since the beginning. It's a genetic element, we try to domesticate ourselves and suppress this natural element."

"We're five guys who are pissed

"It's probably hard to understand from the other side of the iron curtain," he smiles, "but heavy metal was kind of our *saviour*. It was sort of a rebellion, this was one of the things we could do against the government; it was a middle finger to the entire system. It was underground, definitely not OK and it created a brotherhood; if you had long hair you were a friend no matter what. In retrospect I wouldn't change it; it created that environment, that brotherhood, we always hung out together, it was a very defined group.

Listening initially to English punk bands such as UK Subs and The Business before being converted to more metal territories thanks to Iron Maiden, a group whose then-vocalist Paul Di'Anno had enough punk credibility to convert many to the dark side. Nevertheless, while Zoltan realised he had found his calling in life, actually engaging with the music remained something of a challenge.

"We couldn't buy actual records," he laughs. "It was unheard of for someone to have the *vinyl* of, say, *Number Of The Beast* – there was like one guy and people would go to his house just to look at it, you know? People who had friends in Western countries would buy the tapes and copy it, so there was a pirating circle, but there was no other way to get these records. Also the security at all the live shows was the police and you didn't fuck with the police or you'd get your ass kicked. You know when the police is the same as the government, it's kind of like ultimate power, they could just approach you for absolutely no reason and fuck with you, there was nothing to stop them. There were concerts where the police would invade the whole thing."

Aside from the obvious disadvantages of living under such a regime, it quickly became apparent to Zoltan that he would never be able to achieve his dream of becoming a professional musician in such an environment. Though he would remain in the country until his early 20s when he finished his education, he had already made his mind up to move as much as a decade before.

"I decided when I was 10! I was like, 'Give me the backpack and let's go to the minefield!' A lot of people tried it, but you had a trigger-happy border patrol and a minefield between Austria and Hungary, so it was dangerous. For me, the things I wanted to do were not available, or not possible. I wanted to get out and do more, to play music internationally, that was a dream from when I was a little kid. Communism collapsing just gave me more fuel, all these things people said were not possible started happening and when someone says you can't do this or that, for me it's like, 'Let's do it anyway.'"

Moving to America on the back of a record deal with an earlier band, Zoltan soon found himself alone there when the band split, making money doing graphic design work and teaching himself English by sitting down for three months with a Steven King book and an English/Hungarian dictionary. Resolving to form a new band, Zoltan analysed what had gone wrong with the many groups he'd played with before and decided he was going to do things differently this time.

"After being in so many bands, I started with the mindset, 'OK I know what I want to do and I'm going to be really strong about it.' I started to record and got almost an album's worth of material and I decided to find people, show them this and say, 'You are either 100 per cent in or it's not going to happen.' I didn't want to argue, or have another band where it falls apart 'cos people want different things. So it was a very projected thing. So I went and found people I knew or had heard before, I saw every one of these guys before; I was already well aware of them."

Cherry picking musicians he believed suitable, Zoltan sought those who were accomplished in their field, but were also still hungry for success, quickly forming a unit that had many years of experience under its belt. The final part of the puzzle turned out to be Ivan, who was first given the songs and free rein to write the lyrics, and was then was flown over to LA one weekend to show what he could do. Zoltan was so happy with what he saw that he cancelled his return flight – not telling him until afterwards – and took him straight to the studio the next day to record his vocals. Before long the entire album was completed, and Zoltan was able to put some of the songs online, at which point things exploded.

"Within weeks we had like 5,000 downloads every day," explains Zoltan, still amazed, "kids were tattooing the band name and then labels started coming to *us*, 'cos when you get lots of downloads you're at the top of these charts. We were like, 'OK but *this* is what we do, *this* is the record,' and they were like, 'OK.' They didn't change anything. So that first album [*The Way Of The Fist*] – which has [sold] 400,000 copies now – is the one we did on our own. But I think the most interesting thing about this band is the fans, 'cos I go to a lot of shows but it's really rare I see fans this fucking crazy and hardcore."

Having shifted over 40,000 copies of the follow-up album *War Is The Answer* in the first week of release, 5FDP have clearly tapped into something and managed to connect with the public in a way their previous bands did not. Zoltan has his own theories on the reasons for this.

"The live show was a huge part: we weren't kids who have just started, we were older musicians who had played in hundreds of bands. We had tried and tried to achieve our

Ivan welcomes the newest recruit to the Five Finger Army

ESTER SEGARRA

the fuck off and this 's our last chance”

ZOLTAN BATHORY

dreams and it never happened, so you have five fucking pissed-off guys who have been doing this 15 years saying, ‘OK this time we’ll give it 150 per cent, ’cos this is the last chance.’ So yeah, it’s five accomplished guys who are pissed the fuck off.

“Musically I think it’s the honesty of the whole thing – we had no producers changing our sound and lyrically, you know, if you wanna say fuck you, you just have to say fuck you, you don’t need to quote Shakespeare.”

Put it down to ambition, experience, Zoltan’s über-methodical approach, good chemistry, or a sound that carefully balances melodic traditional heavy metal influences with a modern edge. Either way, the group are a sensation and only look set to become even bigger in 2010. Look out world. ✠

5FDP: you wouldn’t like them when they’re angry

THANKS TO THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM – WWW.IWM.ORG.UK. SPECIAL THANKS TO DAVID BEVAN, OPERATIONS MANAGER

Babymetal (left to right): Yuimetal, Su-metal, Moametal

"To bring Japanese metal to the world, it has to be something original…"

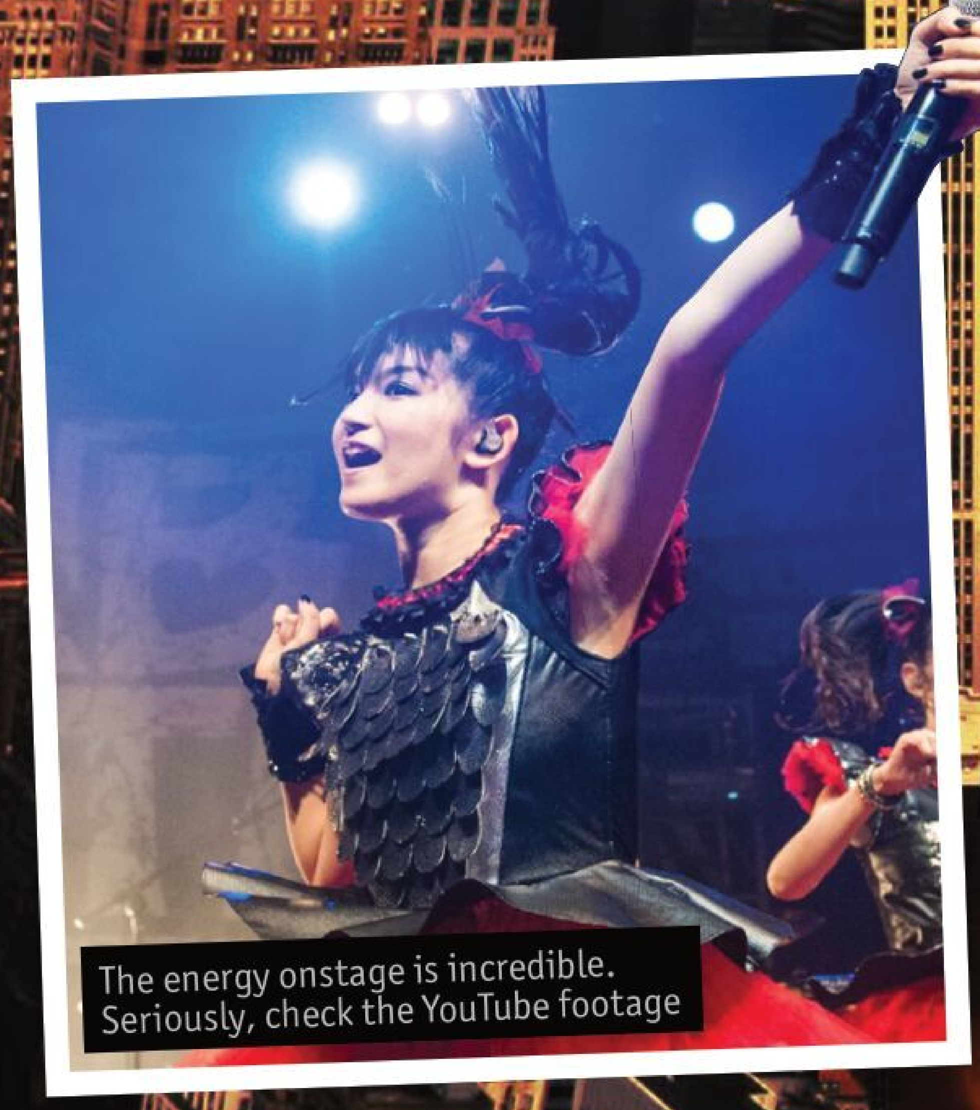
KEY KOBAYASHI EXPLAINS HIS METAL MASTERPLAN

IN 2014, LEGIONS OF DIEHARD METALHEADS FELL IN LOVE WITH AN AUDACIOUS HYBRID OF JAPANESE POP AND METAL. WAS IT THE WORK OF A GENIUS OR…

SOME KIND OF MONSTER

If we hadn't witnessed it with our own eyes, we would never have believed it. It's July 5, 2014 and thousands of metal fans are gathered on the hallowed ground of Knebworth, Hertfordshire, for the first UK Sonisphere festival since 2011. And there they are, on the festival's main stage… three teenage Japanese girls, dancing and singing their way through the catchiest of pop melodies, with big grins plastered across their faces and fingers bent into what we soon discover is "the sign of the fox". Behind them are a band of virtuoso metal musicians, clad in white and faces painted similarly, letting rip with a pinpoint precise and laudably modern barrage of scything riffs and pummelling rhythms. The crowd – sizeable as the girls hit the stage, fucking enormous by the time they leave it – is going righteously and thrillingly bonkers. Is it metal? Is it pop? It's both and neither. It's Babymetal, and within 30 minutes they have not only won over a supposedly hardcore crowd of Maiden and Metallica fans but, even more enjoyably, briskly shut the mewing gobs of a great number of tiresome cynics and online try-hards. Joyful, triumphant and utterly bizarre, Babymetal have arrived and the UK is plainly digging it.

Although they have been building up a head of steam in their native Japan for the last couple of years, Babymetal only began to make inroads on these shores earlier this year, when YouTube links and bewildered blog posts started popping up across social networks and rock and metal media outlets. Understandably, not everyone was immediately impressed by the band's unashamed blending of J-pop (Japanese pop music, obviously) and thunderous metal. In stark contrast to Japan, where manufactured pop is widely accepted as a legitimate part of a wider pop culture that seems largely bereft of embittered whining, the UK's rock and metal scenes are innately suspicious of anything that seems to have been conjured from the hellish mind of a record label mogul, rather than built from the ground up in a more earnest and "real" fashion. We hate Simon Cowell and we love Motörhead. The divide is clear. But part of Babymetal's irresistible charm is that, whether for cultural reasons or not, they don't seem to acknowledge that divide at all. Musically, they are as heavy and sharp as any modern metal band. Vocally? Well, yes, the squeaky and undeniably pop-orientated voices of Su-Metal, Moametal and Yuimetal remain wholly untouched by, say, Slayer's back catalogue, but the final product itself is so deliciously alien and peculiar, not to mention delivered with joyous enthusiasm, that griping about Babymetal not being "proper metal" just comes across as pointless posturing.



The energy onstage is incredible. Seriously, check the YouTube footage

OK, we admit it – we're intrigued. And so *Metal Hammer* caught up with Babymetal at The Forum in London a few days later to have a chat with the band's official mastermind and manager, Key 'Kobametal' Kobayashi, and to ask whether people's cynicism about the self-evidently manufactured nature of the band is anywhere near accurate or just a knee-jerk reaction to something beyond our usual frame of reference. Softly spoken and unfailingly polite, Key certainly looks like a metalhead and, via the interpretative skills of tour manager Nora, is quite happy to explain how Babymetal came to be.

They may look adorable, but the music is heavy as fuck!

"I have been a huge metal fan for 30 years," he states. "But of course metal is only getting older and older and the scene isn't getting bigger anymore. I started thinking that I wanted to come up with something new, something that no one has ever done before, and that's where Babymetal came from. The idea really just fell from the heavens."

At some point, Key may grow weary of being asked whether his band are a cynical exercise in pop exploitation, but for now he seems perfectly happy to address the issue.

"I understand that people outside of Japan don't really understand the pop scene in

PICS: MICK HUTSON, JAKE OWENS. WORDS: DOM LAWSON

The Budokan: just one stage of Babymetal's plan for world domination

Japan and they perceive it differently from how the Japanese would," he nods, thoughtfully. "As a longtime metal fan, I always used to say 'That's not real metal so I'm not listening to it!' I'm a metal purist too, to be honest. But I realised that the scene isn't really getting any bigger. All the old-school metal bands are still around and there's still a fanbase, but it's all getting smaller. So to bring Japanese metal around the world, it has to be something different and original. It's like sushi! Sushi came from Japan and people had never eaten it before, and now everyone eats sushi all over the world. If I just started another metal band like any other, like Iron Maiden or Metallica or whoever, then no one is going to listen to it or be excited by it. Right now, Japan is known for the *Idol* scene and the J-pop, and I just thought that this amalgam of J-Pop and metal would be a good way to represent Japanese metal and Japanese music. And people seem to be enjoying what we do. It's the power of the Fox!"

Ah yes, the Fox. If you were at Sonisphere, you may have seen Babymetal's intro video, which recounted the daft but endearing fictional tale of how the band came together in answer to a request from the metal-loving Fox God to start something called the 'Metal Resistance'. As preposterous as it sounds, there is something very clever and lovable about Babymetal's back-story and the mystique that surrounds those who put the music together. While the metal media speculate about whether the band's eponymous debut album was put together by members of much-loved noughties' crossover crew Mad Capsule Markets or just some terrible Machiavellian producer with a hotline to the best session musicians, the reality is that in Babymetal's world it really doesn't matter a shiny shit. In fact, the whole thing works so brilliantly because it has side-stepped all the usual considerations in favour of the wholesale creation of a unique and fully formed world of its own.

"I was always interested in metal bands that had some mystery to them," says Key. "I wanted to create something that was different from normal everyday life and people will be guessing about what's going on in the band. It's like Disneyland... it's not reality and you're transported to a different place. That's what I wanted to create. The three girls were chosen because they're suitable and they represent the band really well. They're great singers and great performers. But the mystery is important. That's why I created the story about the Fox and the Metal Resistance. The girls are like prophets, speaking for the Fox God. It just makes it different from everything else... and it's fun!"

What really comes across while speaking with Key is that he never expected Babymetal to be received so well overseas. The band have already exceeded expectations at home, becoming a huge deal very quickly and selling out two nights at the legendary Budokan in Tokyo – that's 20,000 people per night – back in March. But conquering the rest of the world wasn't supposed to be easy, not least due to the aforementioned cultural differences that make places like the UK so susceptible to a sneering, cynical outlook on anything that makes up its own rules as it goes along. As a result, Babymetal's Sonisphere experience – not to mention the small matter of a show at The Forum that sold out in a matter of hours, after it had already been up-scaled from a much smaller venue – amounts to an unexpected but very welcome triumph for Key and the band and a very good omen for their collective future.

"When this began I was just experimenting and it was a challenge," says Key. "I didn't know what was going to happen and I never expected it to become so big, so fast. We'd never played a big festival like Sonisphere before and we really didn't know what to expect at a big festival full of real metal fans. In the end, it's just trial and error. We're always moving forward but we really never know what to expect. Right now we're getting a lot of offers from all over the world. We're opening for Lady Gaga in the US and we're doing a festival in Canada and more headline shows, so we want to travel more next year and just see where it takes us."

Key smiles the broad smile of a man who simply can't believe his luck. He may yet end up making tons of money from Babymetal but it's obvious that the music and the experience are what have driven this project from the start. And then, of course, there are the girls themselves. *Metal Hammer* is invited up for a quick chat with Su-Metal

Key Kobayashi invites you to join him, worshipping at the altar of Babymetal

and her diminutive comrades before they take to the stage at The Forum and they greet us with excited grins but plenty of the extreme, disarming politeness for which the Japanese are famed.

"Sonisphere was an amazing experience, because it was the first time we'd played in front of such a huge audience!" beams Su-Metal, every bit the professional but very much a wide-eyed teenager too. "When I walked out I thought 'Oh no, what am I going to do?' but it was such a great experience. With Japanese fans, because we understand each other, they join in with the chanting and the call and response. What's amazing with the UK fans is that even though they don't understand the language, they still sing along with everything! And they also did the Fox sign which was wonderful to see!"

The Babymetal girls have all had a degree of experience within Japan's pop and *Idol* industry through singing and modelling, but the metal scene is a very different world and one that they are clearly enjoying immensely. Su-Metal excitedly recalls meeting Kirk Hammett backstage at Sonisphere and not knowing who he was – "He just seemed like an ordinary guy and a very kind gentleman!" she says – and points out, with some bemusement, that the European crowds that have come to see Babymetal have been predominantly made up of diehard metal fans, as opposed to the Japanese crowds that are often as passionate about pop as they are about heavier music. Most of all, it's obvious that their European adventure has gone way better than any of the three girls could ever have dreamed and that being part of Babymetal is just about as much fun as any human being could realistically withstand. So yes, you can be cynical about Babymetal if you want. Meanwhile, the band, their manager and an increasing number of metalheads are enjoying every second of this unprecedented and wonderfully demented phenomenon.

"We've received so many comments online from the UK and lots of people have been mimicking our dance routines and putting them up on YouTube, so we're getting such a great response and we never expected it," Su-Metal concludes, eyes twinkling. "The response we're getting makes us think that we're being accepted. It feels like a dream!"

"The UK fans don't understand Japanese but they still sing along!"

SU-METAL CAN'T BELIEVE THAT BABYMETAL ARE CONQUERING BRITAIN

The Fox God wants you. Resistance is futile

DIS-ORIENT-ATION

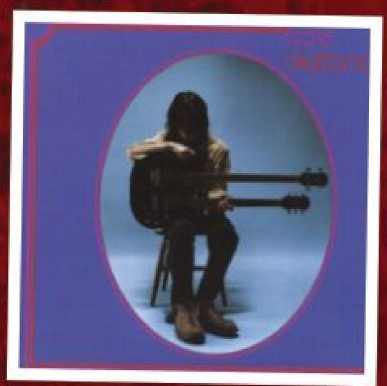
Five more genre-bending bands from Japan.

SPEED, GLUE AND SHINKI
Psychedelic rock trio led by "the Japanese Hendrix", Shinki Chen. For fans of freewheeling fuzz.
RECOMMENDED ALBUM: *Eve* [Atlantic, 1971]

G.I.S.M.
G.I.S.M.'s take on hardcore punk was bizarre, especially the weird vocals of Sakevi Yokoyama.
RECOMMENDED ALBUM: *Detestation* [Dogma, 1983]

BOREDOMS
Legendary experimentalists. Best avoided if you want to keep your sanity intact.
RECOMMENDED ALBUM: *Chocolate Synthesizer* [WEA, 1994]

SIGH
The music to soundtrack your most vivid, surreal nightmares.
RECOMMENDED ALBUM: *Scenario IV: Dead Dreams* [Cacophonous, 1999]



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From languid drones to sparky stoner pop, Boris are shape-shifting eccentrics par excellence.
RECOMMENDED ALBUM: *Akuma No Uta* [Diwphalanx, 2003]

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A LIGHT GOES OUT

Chester Bennington's voice soundtracked a generation and introduced them to a world of heavy music. Tragically, the **Linkin Park** singer took his own life in 2017. We celebrate a life gone far too soon

WORDS: TOM BRYANT • PICTURES: ASHLEY MAILE

Saturday, 20 March, 1999. A skinny 23-year-old in Phoenix, Arizona, signs for a package sent from Los Angeles. It's his birthday, but the package is no present – more an opportunity. Inside is a demo by a band called Xero. One side is instrumental, the other has singing, and throughout a band is trying to blend hip hop with metal.

The kid in Arizona, Chester Bennington, thinks: 'Hmmm, I'm not really into the whole hip hop thing. But the music is really cool.' Then he listens to it again. "I knew I could do it better," he would admit years later.

The next day he goes into a recording studio. He knows people there, having played in a locally successful band, Grey Daze. He listens to the Xero demo once more, lays his own vocals over the top, and then calls Jeff Blue, the LA record label executive who sent it to him.

"I'm done," he tells him. "When should I come out to LA?"

"CHESTER SANG LIKE A FUCKING BEAST"

MIKE SHINODA WAS SCEPTICAL OF CHESTER... UNTIL HE HEARD HIM AUDITION

"No," replies Jeff. "We need you to record some vocals on it."

"Yes, I've done that," says Chester – cocky, self-assured. "Dude, I'm a fucking professional."

Then he puts the tape in his stereo, places the telephone against a speaker, and blasts it down the line.

"When can you be here?" asks Jeff.

The next day, 9am, Chester is outside Jeff's LA office. Within weeks, he is Xero's singer and, after they become Linkin Park, for the next 18 years, he will be the voice, the spirit and the tortured soul at their heart. His death, on July 20, 2017 from an apparent suicide, will stop a generation in its tracks.

That 23-year-old in Phoenix had some problems. "Growing up, for me, was very scary," he said. As a child, he was abused. It was something that greatly affected his life and his music, and something he later opened up on. "It escalated from a touchy, curious, 'what does this thing do' into full-on, crazy violations," he said. "I was getting beaten up and being forced to do things I didn't want to do. It destroyed my self-confidence."

His parents split up when he was 11 years old. His mother left, as did his older sister, while his other sister was never much around. His father, a policeman, worked double shifts to make ends meet. Which just left Chester. "I was pretty much just left at home by myself. It was horrible."

The abuse continued until he was 13. "The only thing I wanted to do was kill everybody and run away," he said. "I hated everybody in my family: I felt abandoned. I wrote a lot, I drew a lot and I wrote a lot of poetry."

It was the poetry that led him to music. Aged 15, he formed the post-grunge band Grey Daze – inspired by his love of bands like Stone Temple Pilots – and says he "knew that music was all I wanted to do". But it was not the only thing. Chester, in part to relieve the demons brought on by the abuse, in part to pass the time, leaned heavily on drugs.

"I was doing a ton of LSD and a lot of drinking," he said. "When we couldn't find acid, we turned to speed. We were smoking it in bongs – I was doing bong-hits of meth. It was ridiculous. Then we'd smoke opium to come down, or I'd drink a lot."

After an incident when some dealers pistol-whipped his friends, he moved back in with his mother. He swapped speed for alcohol and marijuana. "It kept me off the hard drugs," he admitted. But it would take over his life.

Following the break-up of Grey Daze, the arrival of Xero's demo was, Chester felt, his last chance. When he arrived in Los Angeles in 1999, Xero – who had changed their name to Hybrid Theory – were not sure about him.

"He was really skinny, with glasses, and he was wearing this awful butterfly collar shirt that made him look like a cheesy guy from an Arizona nightclub bar," said Mike Shinoda, the man who wrote almost all of Hybrid Theory's music. "He was definitely looking for direction. He was looking at us like it was his ticket."

They were auditioning a number of singers, which did not impress Chester: "I was thinking: 'You've got to be fucking kidding me. Either choose me or don't, but I'm not sitting about fucking wasting my time.' I was the best thing they were going to find!"

"There was one guy who never wore shoes and told us he wanted to do stand-up comedy during our show," admitted Mike, before he finally realised: "Chester sang like a fucking beast."

Hybrid Theory became Linkin Park after signing to Warner Brothers, with the label concerned the original name was too similar to another act. Mike wrote the music then collaborated on lyrics with Chester, as the new singer explored the abuse of his childhood with a man who was then a virtual stranger.

"There really wasn't any room for bashfulness," said Mike. "Some of his lyrics addressed that stuff, so when he and I were talking about the songs, he told me. It was a weird way to get to know each other."

From those sessions came the juxtaposition at the centre of Linkin Park's first two albums, *Hybrid Theory* (whose name they recycled for their debut) and *Meteora*: the howling fury and angst of Chester's internal psyche, and the slick assurance of Mike's rapping. It would be little short of revolutionary.

The guys in Linkin Park had a bet as to how many copies *Hybrid Theory* would sell in the week of its release in October 2000. The lowest guess was a measly two, the highest was Chester's 8,000. It sold 47,000 in its first week alone, and has since sold 20million. "We all just went, 'Holy shit!'" remarked Chester later.

It was a record that came to represent nu metal's commercial zenith. Though Linkin Park were late to that party – and hated being part of it – they came to define it. *Hybrid Theory* delivered rage, fear, anguish and paranoia in thrillingly big riffs and choruses. Its commerciality was key: the guitars were heavy and the emotions visceral, but it played to radio. Metal purists may have baulked at it as pop, but it introduced heavy music to an entirely new generation, acting as a point of entry for many who went on to discover a rock and metal

Chester Bennington
March 20, 1976 – July 20, 2017

Linkin Park introduced a whole generation to metal

"GROWING UP, FOR ME, WAS VERY SCARY"

ART AND MUSIC BECAME CHESTER'S OUTLETS DURING HIS TUMULTUOUS CHILDHOOD

subculture, as well as other nu metal bands and, perhaps more importantly, their influences.

Chester became nu metal's poster boy with his easy-on-the-ear angst, giant vocals and relatably tortured image, even though it was largely Mike's music (Chester once confessed, "If Mike could sing, I wouldn't have a job"). It made him uncomfortable. "I had achieved my lifelong dream," said Chester. "And I was still not happy."

As *Hybrid Theory* grew, so did the criticism – some accused Linkin Park of having been put together like a boy band, so suspicious were they of their success. "We blew up so quickly that there was a lot of resentment," said Chester. "'Who's this fucking Backstreet Boys rock band?' I felt I had to defend myself."

It started shaping Chester. He becamespiky in the press, as did Mike, who admittedto being "bitter". They felt they needed toprove themselves, which they did by touring relentlessly. And that caused its own problems.

"I respect us for getting through that time without killing each other," said Chester. "We were playing six nights a week. We weren't taking care of ourselves."

He drank hard and smoked weed; the rest of Linkin Park did not. "That segregated me from the band," said Chester later. "I didn't feel connected with the guys, we didn't feel like friends. My then-wife and I were at each other's throats. It was a pretty miserable experience. My drinking put up a big barricade with the guys but I thought they just didn't understand me."

Meteora, Linkin Park's second album, was made in the midst of this. And though it cemented their status as megastars, within the band, Chester was falling apart.

A snaphot of Chester Bennington in 2004 is not pretty. "I wasn't leaving my house," he said. "I would shack up in my closet in the dark and shake all day. I would wake up and have a pint of Jack Daniel's to calm down, then I'd pop a bunch of pills and go back in my closet and fucking freak out. I was a mess. I was falling through windows, having seizures and going to hospital the whole time. It was fucking ridiculous. I was a total wreck.

"Because I had started touching on my childhood in our songs, I felt like I was doomed to be this lonely person. I thought I would never have a fulfilling relationship with anyone. All I had were the drugs and my alcohol."

His band staged an intervention, eventually leading to his rehab. "I had no idea I had been such a nightmare," he said. "I knew I had a drinking problem, a drug problem and my personal life was crazy but I didn't realise how much that was affecting people until I got a good dose of 'Here's-what-you're-really-like.'

"They said that I was two people – Chester and then *that* fucking guy. I didn't want to be *that* guy, I wanted to be me, so I did everything possible to stay sober."

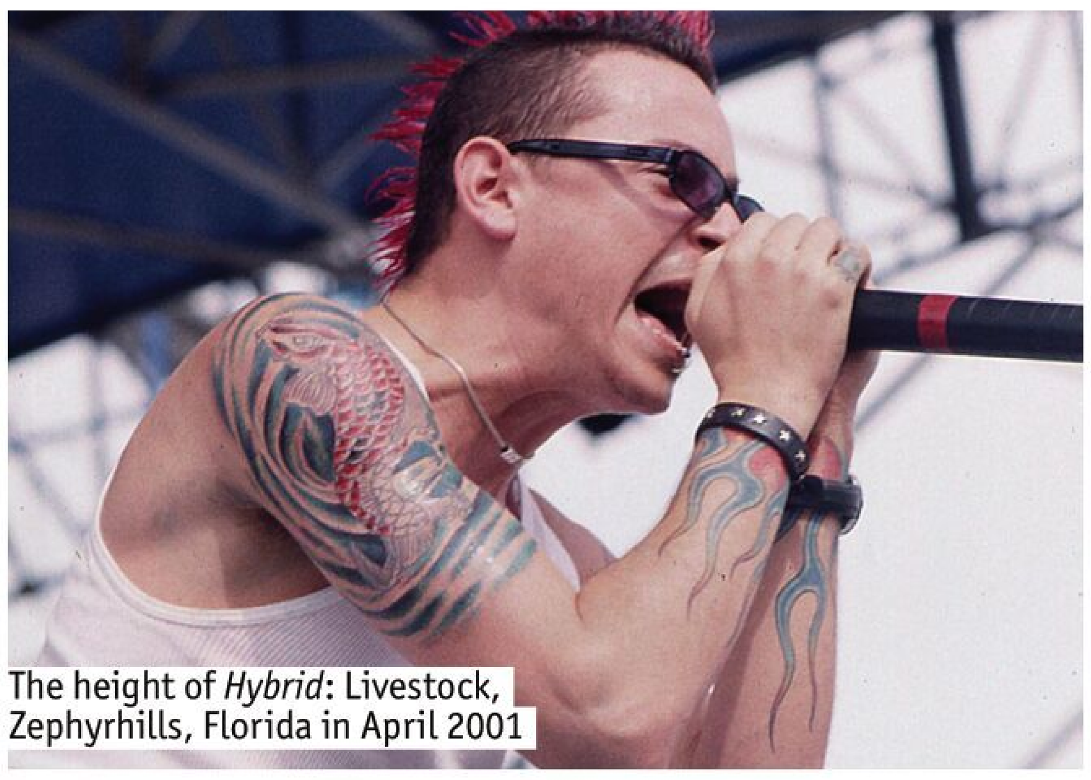
By late 2005, he had divorced his first wife, Samantha Olit, and met Talinda Bentley,a former model. "Talinda kept me walking because I couldn't get there," he said. "It was a very painful road for her too to watch me try to drink myself to death. I had this amazing feeling of falling in love and feeling it coming back. I'd never really felt that before. It was powerful."

As Linkin Park returned to the studio for their third album – 2007's *Minutes To Midnight*, in which they would begin to move away from nu metal – Chester was working on his own material as a purer channel for his emotions.

"There's a specific way we write together [in Linkin Park] and it's not super-personal," he said. "Things have to take a Mike and I vibe and then the rest of the guys give you notes on the lyrics."

So his moody, atmospheric rock side-project

Chester giving it all onstage in 2008 at PNC Bank Arts Center, New Jersey



The height of *Hybrid*: Livestock, Zephyrhills, Florida in April 2001

FRANK WHITE X2 MAIN: PRESS

Dead By Sunrise became a means to detail his journey through addiction and recovery. "I was two different people," he said. "I was the guy writing very personal songs in Dead By Sunrise and then I'd write Linkin Park songs. Dead By Sunrise was a journal of falling in love and falling apart."

The one song that crossed the divide was the second track on *Minutes To Midnight*, *Given Up* – in which Chester details his alcohol issues. "I'd just gotten back from rehab when I wrote that and the guys were like, 'This is fucking good, dude'," he said. "They were letting me just vomit lyrics."

Minutes To Midnight was a bridging album that allowed Linkin Park to escape their nu metal past and pointed to a future of experimentation. It also relieved pressure. No longer were Linkin Park, and their singer, the voice of the nu metal generation. Instead, emo had changed the landscape.

It was noticeable then – and on Linkin Park's fourth studio album, 2010's *A Thousand Suns*, in which they experimented with moody beats and atmospherics – that they all appeared to relax. Mike, normally intense and protective, became more laidback. Chester, his demons in check, was easy-going. Tanned, fit and healthy, he had a smile on his face in interviews for the first time in years.

"Dead By Sunrise was actually good for Linkin Park because I got all that shit out," said Chester. "It meant I could make a record with Linkin Park that wasn't typical. It wasn't just me talking about my poor, hurt little feelings again."

They reintroduced guitars on their 2012 fifth album, *Living Things*, and there was still the sense the band were increasingly happy in their own skin. Musically, they could experiment, but they could still headline festivals in the knowledge the old nu metal belters would buy them leeway from the crowds.

Chester seemed happier: "I just don't want to be that [drunken] person anymore. I'm a person of faith and I take that very seriously. I pray all the time. That keeps me in check."

His complex family – he had six children with three partners – was working. "Out of the turmoil of my life, we now have an extremely stable environment," he said.

Then in 2013, he was offered his dream gig of replacing Stone Temple Pilots' troubled singer, Scott Weiland. Part of the reason he said yes was that, the more Linkin Park's music changed, the more Chester was having to find other spaces in their music for himself. Stone Temple Pilots allowed him to be a frontman again.

It was a two-year ride he enjoyed, but which came to an end when touring Linkin Park's 2014 album *The Hunting Party* began demanding his time. A return to the energy of their earlier recordings, Linkin Park found an unlikely heavy tone on it in collaborations with Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello, System Of A Down's Daron Malakian and Helmet's Page Hamilton.

This year's *One More Light* changed the band's sound again, moving them into pop territory with a host of mainstream collaborations, but Chester remained defensive after criticism that they had sold out, telling fans to "move the fuck on". He continued to be open about his issues, talking of the "bad neighbourhood" in his head that inspired the song *Heavy* from that album.

The news of Chester's death on Thursday July 20, 2017, two months after the death of his close friend Chris Cornell and on the Soundgarden singer's birthday, was an appalling end to a career of rare and shining brilliance.

"I PRAY ALL THE TIME. THAT KEEPS ME IN CHECK"

THE SINGER TURNED TO FAITH TO HELP HIM BATTLE HIS PROBLEMS

For a man who had, throughout his life, always been able to stay one step ahead of his demons – whether through music, personal strength or the love of his family – it was a desperate blow that, at 41, they finally caught up with him.

For many, he will be remembered for his presence onstage. In the UK, one of the most defining performances was when the band played *Hybrid Theory* in full at Download in 2014. Let the cheers and raucous reaction serve as a memory for one of the defining talents of an age. ✠

In Memorian

Some of the other stars we have lost since 1986

Cliff Burton (Metallica)
1962-1986

Chris Cornell (Soundgarden)
1964-2017

Dimebag Darrell (Pantera)
1966-2004

Ronnie James Dio
1942-2010

Euronymous (Mayhem)
1968-1993

Paul Gray (Slipknot)
1972-2010

Jeff Hanneman (Slayer)
1964-2013

Vinnie Paul (Pantera)
1964-2018

Lemmy
1945-2015

Chuck Schuldiner (Death)
1967-2001

Layne Staley (Alice In Chains)
1967-2002

Wayne Static (Static-X)
1965-2014

Peter Steele (Type O Negative)
1962-2010

Jimmy 'The Rev' Sullivan (Avenged Sevenfold)
1981-2009

M. Shadows and Ozzy Osbourne: two figures in black, pointing at you…

Dateline 2017: with Black Sabbath stepping into the void for the very last time, we asked Avenged Sevenfold's M. Shadows to conduct a special, era-defining interview with the Double O himself. Here's what happens when…

GENERATIONS COLLIDE

"IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT, GET OFF THE FUCKING STAGE"

OZZY HAS NO TIME FOR EGO-DRIVEN SHENANIGANS

WORDS: MERLIN ALDERSLADE & M. SHADOWS
PICTURES: JOHN McMURTRIE

Nothing to see here... just two legends having a chinwag over a cuppa...

"I THOUGHT METALLICA WERE TAKING THE PISS OUT OF ME"

OZZY COULDN'T BELIEVE BANDS HELD SABBATH IN HIGH REGARD

It's a rare thing to know that you're bearing witness to history in the making. It's even more unusual to see it happen on a buttfuck-freezing Tuesday night in Glasgow. And yet here we are, locked away backstage in the labyrinthine Hydro Arena, in a curtained-off dressing room sitting across from two iron-clad icons of our world.

In one corner, Ozzy Osbourne: frontman of Black Sabbath, the band that started it all and without whom this very magazine – hell, every single facet of this scene – wouldn't exist. The single biggest personality heavy metal has ever produced, and a man who has now clocked up almost five decades at the top of our game.

In the other corner, M. Shadows: singer of Avenged Sevenfold, the band who have attempted to pick up the baton and take heavy music striding into its next chapter, fighting their way up the ranks over a decade-plus to stand as one of our biggest 21st-century names.

When Shadows – a huge Sabbath fanboy himself – agreed to help chair what will serve as Ozzy's final interview under the Sabbs moniker, we knew we had something very special on our hands. Put plainly: moments like these just don't tend to come along very fucking often.

That said, there is something of the stars aligning in this meeting of heavyweights. As we chat today, Black Sabbath are midway through their last ever tour – a definitive full stop on a career that has come to define metal as we know it. Birmingham's finest are the godfathers. The OGs. The start and endgame for alternative culture. Their exit from this world will be felt keenly and immediately.

Avenged, meanwhile, are two days removed from wrapping up their biggest UK tour to date: an arena-juggling monster that saw them take down two packed London O2 arenas and debut their awe-inspiring new live show.

That makes this not only a true clash of generations, but a symbolic passing of the torch – a first and final opportunity to hold an exclusive audience with these two cornerstones of everything our magazine has been built on.

With only Hammer and our photographer John McMurtrie also present, it's time to sit back and find out what happens when eras unite.

SHADOWS: "So, Metal Hammer asked me to interview you!"

OZZY: "That's cool, mate!"

S: "Yeah, it really is! I guess it's because my band are like the younger generation coming up, and you guys are now on your last ever tour, so it's come together. How's the tour all going so far?"

O: "Well, today I've got a fucking perforated ear drum. It's like my head's in a box."

S: "Oh, man. That sounds bad."

O: "Yeah, it feels like my ears are underwater, you know? But I'm ready! Let's do it!"

S: "Well, since this is the last Black Sabbath tour, what tours stand out in particular for you from the early days?"

O: "Every tour has its moments. A tour's a tour, you know? We've been doing this for 47 years, but it's like anything in life; you have a good day, you have a bad day, you have a good gig, you have a bad gig. Sometimes you go up there and it's fucking dreadful, ha ha! Every stage has a different sound. But that's just rock'n'roll!"

S: "Were there any bands in particular that you remember from the early days that you enjoyed touring with?"

O: "Well, the most dangerous one I ever did personally was my solo tour with Mötley Crüe in

Ozzy and Mötley Crüe in the messier days of 1984

the 80s. Fucking hell, it was nuts. We were like pirates. I said to my tour manager, 'Fucking hell, one of us is gonna die on this tour.' And sure enough, shortly after, Vince Neil killed someone in a car. But for every tour, even now, I'm not one of these guys that reads the riot act to support bands. I don't say, 'You can't be there, you can't do that.' I look at it like, it's a show, it's not about being on the 'A Stage' or 'B Stage', it's just a fucking show. It's best to be nice rather than be an asshole. To be an asshole you've got to have a good memory!"

S: "Ha ha ha! Very true!"

O: "The band we've got on this last tour, Rival Sons, they're a good bunch of guys. I always greet them and tell them that if there's anything they need, just ask us. They don't know what we're gonna be like. In the old ➤

Avenged are now filling arenas with the genre Sabbath started

MAIN ABOVE: GETTY

Bros. Yeah, this has to be one of *Hammer*'s favourite shoots ever

"YOU GUYS STARTED THIS FOR ALL OF US"

AVENGED WOULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT BLACK FUCKING SABBATH

days, headline bands would have the lights turned right up for their supports [to try to sabotage them] and all that kind of shit. I didn't like that. If you can't stand the heat, get off the fucking stage, you know?"

S: "Absolutely. So you look after your support bands?"

O: "You just treat them like people! Otherwise you end up with war, and touring's a battle enough without that. Just because you're the opening act, it doesn't mean you're not important. I remember when we toured with Kiss, and it was dead for us! All the audience were dressed up in makeup! But it was fun, and if it's not fun, don't do it. If you don't like this gig, get a day job! My mum used to say to me, 'When are you gonna stop fucking around with this band? Get a real job!' That's what she thought, you know, but I just don't fancy a job at McDonalds, flipping burgers, ha ha ha! I couldn't hold down a real job anyway…"

S: "Me either. Back to Sabbath: why exactly do you think this band got so big?"

O: "You know what? That's a mystery that I'll never understand. I used to think bands were pulling my leg when they told me they loved Black Sabbath. I remember when I had Metallica opening up for me [in '86], and I went past their dressing room and I could hear Sabbath's music coming out! I was so oblivious, I said to my assistant, 'Are they taking the piss?!' When you're in the eye of the storm, you don't know how big the storm is. So I don't know the answer to that. But I am glad. And now Black Sabbath's nearly 50 fucking years old…"

S: "What do you think Sabbath's most important contribution to metal is?"

O: "I don't know. People always say we invented heavy metal. But I like The Kinks, Zeppelin, The Who, and I think we just spawned from that. But I do think that Tony Iommi, for what it's worth, is the king of all demonic riffs. There's just no one to fucking touch him. Considering he had his fretboard fingers chopped off… to this day I'm still amazed he knows he's touching the strings. He's amazing. He's one of these guys that you can give any instrument to and he'll come out of his dressing room playing something on it. It could be the bagpipes, or anything really."

S: "Ha! Yeah, no one can touch Tony."

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY

Tony Iommi onstage in New York last year. "No one can touch him"

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Shadows in full-on fanboy mode

Dressed in a baggy black t-shirt, jewellery, black jeans and a (you guessed it) black beanie, Shadows looked every inch the modern-day rock star while he was snarling, screaming and horn-throwing his way through his shoot with the Prince Of Darkness less than 10 minutes before this interview. Right now, though, it's very much Matt Sanders the heavy metal fan who is present and correct, evidently as stoked as we are to be sitting centimetres away from the man who started it all, and listening attentively to the answers his interviewee offers (and, to be fair to the Avenged frontman, he makes a solid music journalist. The fucker). Ozzy, meanwhile, despite his fame and stature, remains as real as it gets, waving away any superlatives thrown his way and giving the air of a boy from Birmingham genuinely humbled to have been able to do what he does. Despite being savvy enough to click into 'Ozzy mode' for the shoot moments ago (honestly, it's a sight to behold to witness him go Full Vogue and throw about 80 poses in two minutes), he appears bemused to be treated as anything other than a rock'n'roll fan putting on rock'n'roll shows. And, despite his 68 years and shuffling ways (and Jesus, can the man shuffle at speed), he's chatty, alert and quick to answer everything Shadows throws at him, whether it's discussing Sabbath's career, his solo ventures or the next generation of metal heavyweights...

S: "For me, as someone in a band, you guys really did start all this for all of us."

O: "On Ozzfest, younger bands would come up to me and go, 'Ooooh, we are not worthy!' [does bowing motion]. I get embarrassed by all that. And some of it, when bands say, 'You're our biggest influence', I can see it, but with some of them I just think, 'Where the fuck does that come from?!' What I think we did, is that we handed the torch on. Why we did

James Hetfield and Ozzy onstage together at the 25th Anniversary Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Concert at Madison Square Garden in 2009

THEO WARGO/GETTY

SPECIAL REVIEW

BLACK SABBATH

GLASGOW SSE HYDRO

How did the masters fare on their final Scottish bow?

With Sabbath having become such a solid,reliable cornerstone of our world once againover the five-plus years since their 2012reunion, it's easy to take seeing gamechanginganthems like Fairies Wear Boots,Into The Void and N.I.B. played live againfor granted. But, even as the titanic trioof Ozzy Osbourne, Tony Iommi and GeezerButler take to the stage (backed onceagain by the solid Tommy Clufetos), there isa looming sense of dread hanging over theSSE tonight – the realisation that soonwe really will never see these three menshare a stage together becoming sharperby the minute. Even despite suchforebodings, it's impossible not to getswept up in the sheer, unadulterated heaviness of the opening notes of BlackSabbath. This right here is the moment that birthed the reason everyone in this building is here today; the reason any of us have ever spent money on an album adorned with gory artwork, spanked a few coins on a grubby old jukebox to hear some heavy riffage orcovered our walls in posters packed withugly, snarling blokes in leather. This is the inception of heavy metal, and with Ozzy sounding on form and Messrs Iommi and Butler sounding as in sync and thunderous as ever, it still sounds utterly fucking glorious."I've burst a fucking ear drum!" shoutsOzzy after the first song ends, confirmingsome temporary hearing difficulties that herevealed to us earlier. "But I wanted to playfor you guys," he adds to cheers. While his affliction doesn't initially trip him up, Fairies Wear Boots and Under The Sun both sounding ace, there are a couple of times tonight where it's clearly giving him some bother. The Double O never goes fully out of tune, but he does occasionally come in a pitch too low, most noticeably on a misfiring War Pigs as he frantically signals to the sound desk to turn his mic up. When things do click, however,they really are spectacular. The ever-reliableIron Man sounds colossal – given symbolic new meaning since Tony Iommi's lymphoma recovery – and Children Of The Grave is a rumbling, fire breathing monster, while a genuinely spine tingling Snowblind stealsthe show completely, reminding every one once again of the pure, unbridled power of this most vital of bands. The 'show' part of the show is kept to a minimum, a few tokenistic effects peppered around the giant screens providing more occasional distraction than enhanced experience, but it's all about the songs. And, as the final,crushing few notes of Paranoid finish this particular page of Sabbath's final chapter, it's hard to not feel that we have lost something truly fundamental, something very primal to everything we hold dear. Holdon, we've just got something in our eye...

C'mon, Ozzy… Glasgow isn't *that* cold…

"EVERYBODY HAS THEIR FIVE MINUTES OF EGO"

INCLUDING OZZY HIMSELF

Shadows turns out to be a bloody good music journalist. Damn the multi-talented bastard…

"IT WAS SAD THAT BILL NEVER GOT IT TOGETHER"

OZZY RUES HIS EX-BANDMATE'S ABSENCE FROM THE REUNION

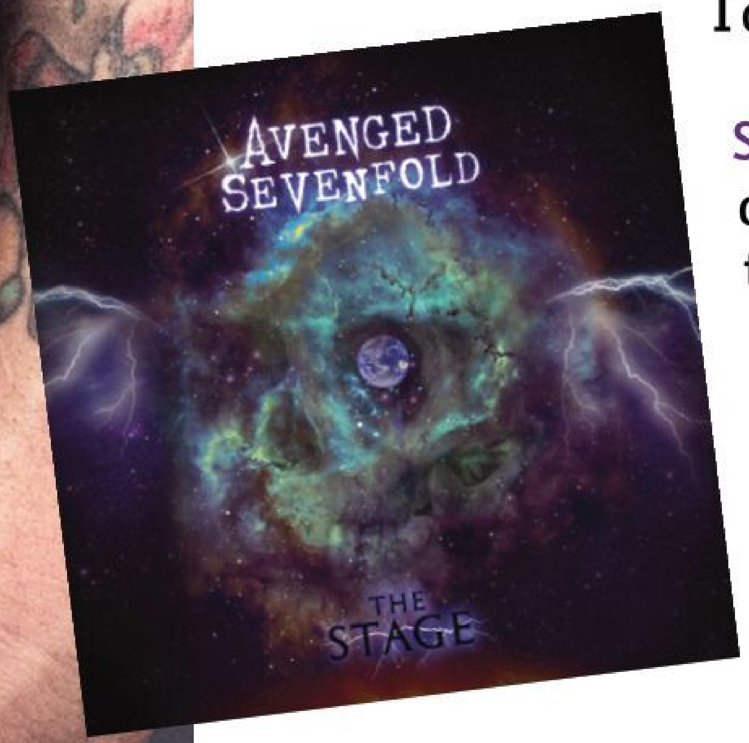
Ozzfest is because when Sharon phoned up Lollapalooza to see if they'd book me, they said I was a dinosaur. So she said, 'Fuck you, we'll do our own festival' and that's what happened!"

S: "And we played Ozzfest! Do you think it's possible for a band nowadays to have the same sort of impact as bands like Sabbath? What advice would you give to the next generation?"

O: "Well, Metallica weren't always the Metallica you see now. They were just an opening band, and they're a fucking monster now. But they're good guys, good people. A guy said to me a long time ago: 'You're gonna meet a lot of people. Don't fuck with them on the way up, 'cause you gotta meet the same people on the way down.' Everybody has their five minutes of ego, it's part of the job, you just have to get over yourself. Look, I'm on the inside looking out, and I'm really humbled that people look up to us, but I'm not very good in the giving advice section. Just have fun! "

S: "Right! So when you got fired in '79 and you went on and found Randy Rhoads and had a successful solo career, did you keep tabs on the other Sabbath guys?"

O: "What happened there is that they got Dio, and it spurred them on and it spurred me on. You wanna outdo each other, and it's healthy. Now I couldn't give a shit!"



S: "Ah, you have had some classic albums yourself, though!"

O: "Well that's just what happens. It's like when McCartney left The Beatles."

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Eighty poses in two minutes. You'd think Ozzy's done this before or something…

"I THINK WE'VE HANDED THE TORCH ON"

OZZY ON HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEAVY

S: "I can actually hear tons of Beatles influence in the Ozzy stuff."

O: "Oh yeah. The Beatles were my Black Sabbath, if you like. I met Paul McCartney, and he's very honest. He said the trouble with The Beatles was that they were lacking musicianship. I said, 'But fucking hell, they had the best top lines ever.' I just like melody. Some of this growly stuff gets a bit over the top for me. And I fucking hate hip hop, ha ha ha! But some of the lyrics are fucking great!"

S: "How have you been able to make meaningful music throughout generations?"

O: "It's an impossible question. My solo music and Sabbath music is a bit different, and it's all different styles. Ronnie James Dio did a great job with the Sabbath stuff as well, because you go to any metal festival in Europe now, and they all want to be him! He's dearly missed."

S: "Is there anything left that you wish you'd achieved with Sabbath?"

O: "Doing Sabbath again was like putting a pair of old boots on. I went to school with Tony, I lived near Geezer, so we're all like brothers, really. The sad thing was that Bill never got it together. I don't know what the deal is there, because the one thing I don't do is negotiating or contracts. I don't want to be involved in any of that."

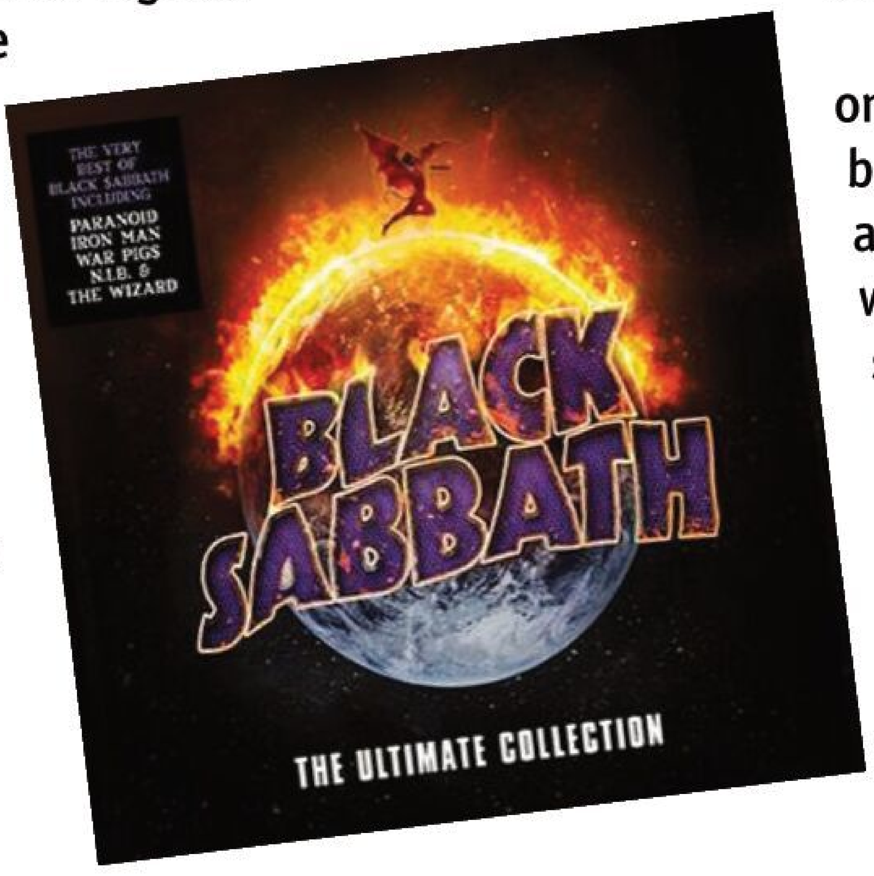
S: "That's probably wise. I know you should probably rest your voice for the show, so the one last thing I wanted to ask you was: how do you hope Black Sabbath will be remembered?"

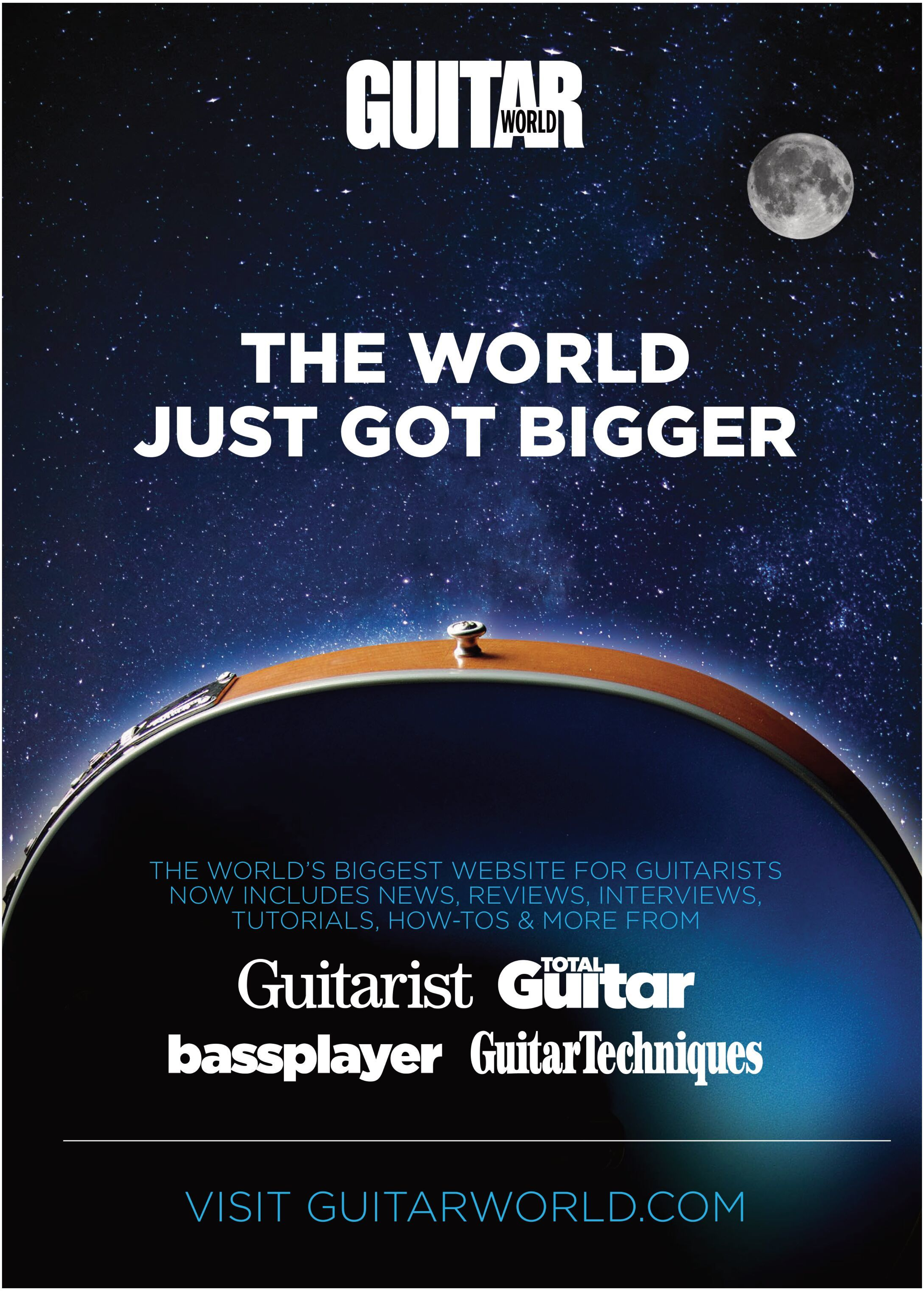
O: "Just the fact that we're remembered is good enough. We weren't created by some business guys. We were four guys, we had an idea, and it worked. Don't give up on your dreams. Dreams are what this is all about!"

And with that, the Prince Of Darkness jolts up, offers both Shadows and Hammer a warm handshake and speed-shuffles his way out of his dressing room to get ready for the show. In less than an hour, he'll make his way onstage to belt out some of the most influential songs ever written in front of a Scottish crowd for the very last time with Sabbath. After this, he'll do the same for Leeds, London and, finally, Birmingham, the place where it all started. While rumours of more Ozzy solo action after this run means the Double O is unlikely done with us quite yet, the finality of this tour is impossible to shake.

"Man, that was fucking crazy," beams Shadows as he looks back over a few select shots from today's shoot. "Did you see all his poses? I need to work on my moves!"

Quite where metal will go once its architects have all bowed out for good is anyone's guess, but witnessing these two men shoot the shit today, it's hard not to believe that as long as there is passion, belief and, above all else, realness, heavy will always find a way. ✠

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Heavy Load

Heavy questions for heavy rockers

All hail **Lemmy** – the ultimate metal icon.

Interview: **Henry Yates** Portrait: **Kevin Nixon**

He was born Ian Fraser Kilmister on Christmas Eve, 1945 and passed away 70 years and four days later, on December 28, 2015. But you knew him best by the monicker that has become a byword for volume, excess, foot-long bar tabs and endless bed notches: Lemmy. If you like a gamble, he was undoubtedly your man, beating the odds and outpacing fashion to drag Motörhead through four decades of music. In 2011, we caught up with the great man to get his thoughts on life's biggest questions…

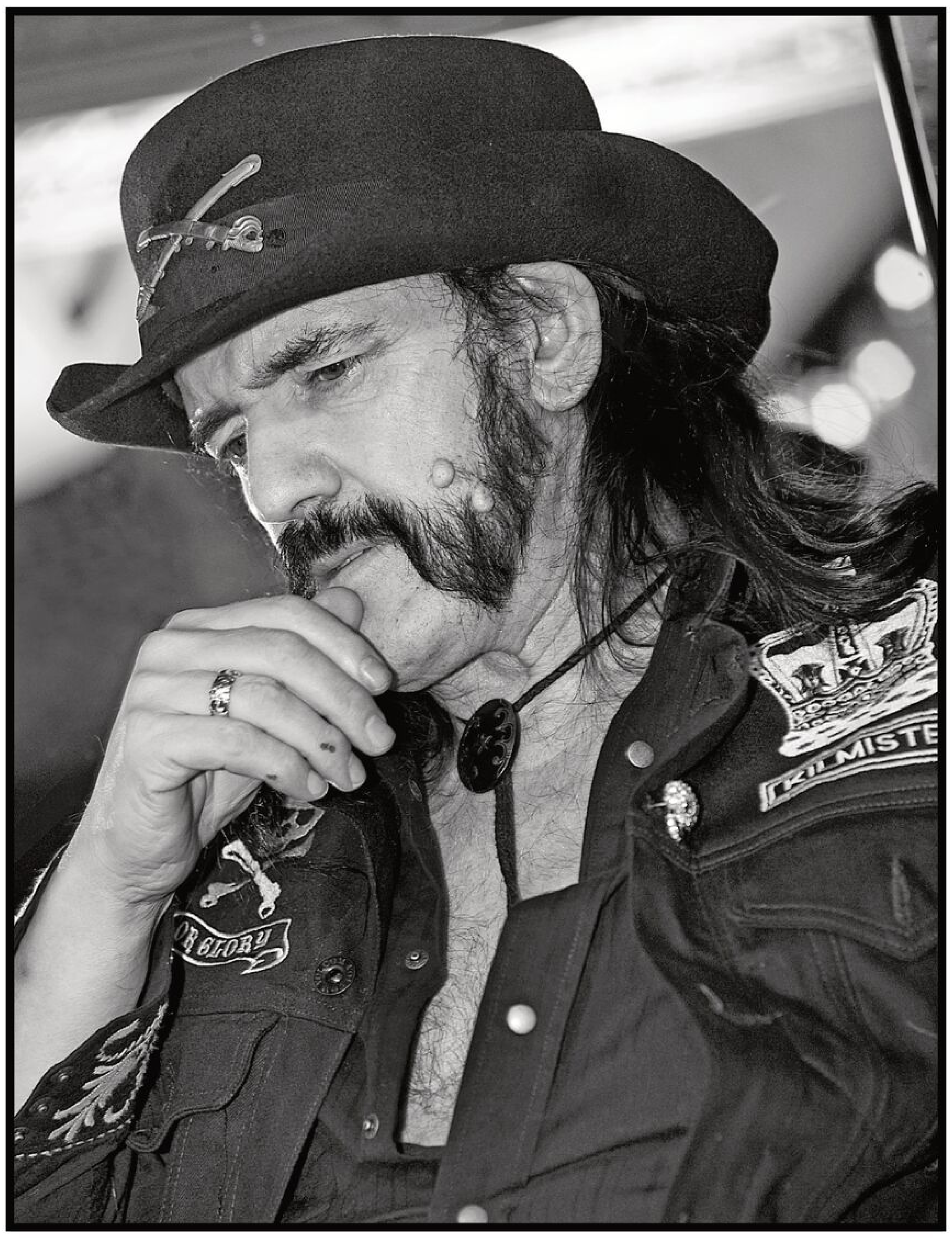
Burial or cremation?
Cremation. Burial doesn't really appeal to me. The idea of being eaten is a bit of a liability. Besides which, if you're cremated, you don't have to wake up in a coffin if they inadvertently bury you alive. You can scatter my ashes where you fucking want. It's all gonna blow away in a couple of hours, innit?

What's your greatest fear?
Nothing keeps me awake at night except toothache. There's no fear, except maybe fear of extreme, long-lasting pain. I'm not scared of sharks or anything. I can't swim, you see, so that one's out. I might be scared of tyrannosaurus rex if they did bring that back.

You live in LA. Have you ever been tempted by therapy or plastic surgery?
Nah. I'm far too English for therapy. As for plastic surgery… I fucking hate hospitals, man. They always give you bad news. I don't go in 'em voluntarily, my God no. But I won't be coming back to England. I'm proud to be English, but the England I'm proud of has gone. The riots were a symptom of that. I mean, you've always had riots. Kids just need an excuse and they're gonna be out on the street, waving things about.

Does it frustrate you when people misunderstand your Nazi weaponry collection?
If they're gonna be that stupid to think I'm a fucking Nazi, there's no hope for them anyway. Just because you collect something doesn't mean you are one. If you collect baseball memorabilia, people don't think you're fucking Babe Ruth. It's stupid. It's a collection, that's it.

Have you ever Googled yourself?
I don't need to, because I know what really happened. The internet is inevitable. I just wish the record companies had got into it a bit earlier and not made such cunts of themselves. They could have gone with it and it could have worked out better for everyone. But no, as usual they banged their fucking heads against the wall until it was too late.



"Do I believe in God? I believe there's a power out there but I don't think it's got a beard."

You've talked about shagging the same girls as your son, Paul. Isn't that a bit weird?
Well, there's a lot of chicks who like that – if you 'keep it in the family', so to speak. We only did it twice, it wasn't a constant stream. What kind of women do I attract these days? You'd be surprised, man. I was surrounded by country'n'western girls last night at the Rainbow.

How bad are your hangovers?
I don't get 'em. You have to stop drinking to get hangovers. It's still Jack Daniel's, vodka occasionally, cheap beers now and again. I've been drinking Baileys and vodka, which is like a huge, alcoholic chocolate milkshake. And what's not to love about that? Think Baileys is a ladies' drink, do you? Listen, man, anything that is alcoholic and gets you the taste of chocolate can be anybody's fucking drink.

Are you a good father?
I do my best. Which isn't always great, because I didn't meet Paul until he was six, so we lost that bit. His mother wouldn't let me talk to him for years, but then he moved out here and it's been alright since then. Apart from that I've done my best. I don't think I'm a bad role model. I'm as good as any footballer. Who are you supposed to choose as a fucking role model, Mr Gladstone?

Couldn't your flat use a clean?
My flat's not untidy, just very crowded. It's even more crowded now, because someone's just given me a fucking water buffalo skull.

Isn't it unfair that you're alive when so many clean-living people die young?
No, I don't think it's unfair at all. I think it's exactly right. I put it down to dogged perseverance. I refuse to let it get me down. I was a hellraiser… but you have to let go of it a bit. I'm sixty-fucking-six at Christmas. How much more hellraising have I got left to do? I did most of it already – twice.

How did you react to the news of Wurzel's death earlier this year?
What do you think? That's one thing that pisses me off about journalists nowadays: 'How did you feel when one of your friends died?' How would *you* fucking feel? You can't put it into words. Of course, I felt terrible. It was Wurzel, my fucking best mate in the band for 11 years. That's a stupid question.

Do you believe in God?
I believe there's a power out there, but I don't think it's got a beard. I think it's all random. I like reincarnation as a theory, but it's probably wishful thinking.

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